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Edited by K. S. Mahadevan, printed and published by R. V. Murthy for Sri Shanmukhamanda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha, Bombay-400 022. Printed at Rajuri Printers, 156 Avvai Shanmugam Road, Madras-600 086. Registered with Registrar of Newspapers for India No. R.N. 2793/875.

Vol. VI

July 1980

No. 3

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Sringara in Traditional Bharatanatyam

BY

LAKSHMI VISWANATHAN, M.A.

Rasa, a term defined and elaborated in Bharata's *Natyashastra*, has received eloquent treatment at the hands of both Indian and European scholars who have delved deep into this phenomenon with a curiosity and an enthusiasm worthy of its importance in aesthetics. Rasa is aesthetic experience markedly different from the experiences of practical life. As the Italian scholar Gnoli says—“Rasa is not a thing in itself, formed previous to the act of consciousness by which it is perceived, but the consciousness itself (and therefore the perception) which, freed from external interference from all practical desires, becomes Rasa or aesthetic consciousness.” This aesthetic consciousness has no end outside itself—it is pleasure, it is beatitude and a fulfilment. It is both the act of tasting and what is tasted. Rasa is born as a result of the union (interaction rather) of the determinants (*vibhava*), consequents (*Anubhava*) and the transitory mental states (*Vyabicharin*).

and the scope it affords for poetic descriptions, and also the inherent scope it provides for a kaleidoscope of subtle histrionics has made “Sringara” a king (Queen perhaps!) among Rasas.

TELUGU MASTERPIECES

In the musical compositions forming the traditional Bharatanatyam repertoire, ample justice is done to Sringara—in the Telugu pada varnams and more especially in the Telugu padams and javalis. Although songs in other languages, particularly in Tamil, abound with the theme of Sringara, it is in the Telugu compositions that we find some of the most soul-stirring situations and analogies, set forth in a delicate sequence of ideas. The raga lakshana (musical score) of these pieces blends with the mood of the lyrics at times so beautifully that one wonders whether the inventor of the raga had this theme in mind when he put together the notes.

STHAYI BHAVA

From the permanent mental state called Rati (Delight) arises the Rasa called Sringara (the erotic) and of all the Rasas mentioned in treatises allied to the *Natyashastra*, Sringara occupies a special place, not merely because of its power to captivate the imagination of a poetic mind, but also because of its unquestioned human appeal. The variety of situations

A point that cannot be over-emphasised is the particular appeal that “Vipralamba Sringara” (love in separation) has had over “Sambhoga Sringara” (love in union) in capturing the imagination of the poet. Although we often hear explanations such as the yearning of the Atman (human soul) to be one with the *Paramatman* (God soul), and the whole concept is treated as Bhakti Sringara, yet a scrutiny

of the lyrics of the padas tells us that nothing moves a poet more than separation from his beloved. The frailty and vulnerability of human emotions give rise to that anguished cry for union—that longing for fulfilment; and a variety of moods and situations are portrayed in this 'separation', giving rise to the full flowering of that universal human condition of Kama (Love).

STATES OF DESIRE

In the Nāṭyaśāstra are mentioned ten kinds of Kama (Love). . . . Longing (*abhiṣāsa*), Anxiety (*chintā*), Recollection (*anusmṛti*), enumeration of the loved one's merits (*gunakīrtana*), Distress (*udvega*), Raving (*Vilāpa*), Insanity (*unnada*), fever (*vyādhi*), Stupor (*jadata*) and Death (*marana*).

Examples of almost all these states of love abound in the traditional dance—music compositions, and indeed in the padams of Kṣhetragana, the raga-bhava meshes so beautifully with the content of the song that both singer and dancer some times are tempted to pause for a moment in the course of performance to savour the charm of the subtle blend of mood and music.

Longing (*abhiṣāsa*) arises from efforts born of desire and wish. It is a state which ultimately leads to the means of meeting of the beloved. The very first line of the pada varnam in Bhairavi 'Mohamāna Enneethil' of the Tanjore Quartette sets out this idea of longing. Anxiety (*chinta*) should be indicated by speaking to the Saki—the female messenger (*duti*) words such as:—'By what means and in what manner will there be union with the beloved?' A further stage in this anxiety is speaking to the Saki

of one's physical condition by a display of emotional states such as half-closing the eyes, or frail and thinning arms from which the bangles slip, and so on. The Charana of the Kamas pada varnam, where the nayika addresses the Saki—'Rave . . . Namata vinu' and goes on to elaborate her condition, is a fine example of this anxiety.

FINE SHADES

Sighing repeatedly, being listless, sleep less, distracted and thinking constantly of the beloved is the state of 'anusmṛti' (Recollection). Such a state of the nayika is commonly described in a number of padas, in some more specifically and elaborately and in others more suggestively and subtly. The Sankarabharanam padam 'Dharījuchū sunnadi needu priya' describes this listlessness. So also does the Saki indicate her mistress's disquiet and sleeplessness in the Tamil padam in Bhairavi 'Velavare'.

Sringara in separation takes on several attitudes and one that is understandable from a psychological viewpoint is the Nayika's somewhat exaggerated praise of the qualities and merits of her absent lover. She confides in her Saki, sometimes even in a rather uninhibited manner and with smiles and sportful movements, she enumerates his qualities, not merely the impersonal virtues, but also his prowess as a lover! This is called Gunakīrtana. A Kṣhetragana pada in Kambodhi 'Endhāda sakkānivade' states the unparalleled beauty of the Lord in the pallavi. In several padams, the recalling of happy days spent in union with the beloved gives ample scope for portraying the erotic sentiment. At the same time there is an undercurrent of pathos because it is the longing for such days to recur that

brings forth vivid poetic descriptions from the Nayika.

DISTRESS

The mood of distress (*udvega*) and lamentation (*Vilāpa*) appear in several compositions, each one vying with the other in portraying the degree of pathos. Whether it is sighing and sleeplessness, whether it is a description of the Nayika suffering the sharp piercing of Madan's arrows or finding the cool moonlight hot as cinders, she is a picture of distress caused by separation. She sheds tears, she dreams of her beloved, imagines his embrace, haunts the places he habitually visits, and acts distraught and inconsolable. One of the most moving padams of Kṣhetragana where this indescribable feeling of loss is poignantly expressed with great beauty of thought-sequence and brief eloquence is the Punṇagavarali piece 'Ninnu juchi'.

SORROW

The moods of distress and sorrow are sometimes aggravated to such an extent that the nayika behaves in an almost insane manner (*unnada*). In the Bhairavi padam 'Rama Rama prana sahi', this *jadata* (stupor), this dejection amounting to madness, shocks one's sensitivities and creates a mood where one can identify totally with the Nayaka's plight. Being devoid of all the pleasures of love and losing hope in ever enjoying them, a heroine is sometimes even portrayed as suffering sickness (*vyādhi*). It is a heart sickness and psychosomatically she suffers several attendant ailments. As in the charanam of Papanasam Sivan's pada varnam in Sranjani, the Nayika is one who is 'Pidivadhā noi kondah', and the hero has to be entreated to hasten 'Viraindu marundu tha'. The ultimate

blow in Vipralamba Sringara is *marana* (Death) and although some compositions indicate a state bordering on collapse, none reach that point of utter pathos.

AN ARTISTE'S PARADISE

The variety of moods, situations and circumstances that our traditional compositions offer within the framework of Sringara is so rich that handling these pieces is a talented artiste's paradise. True, many of them are explicitly erotic in content and therefore require a judicious blend of maturity and aesthetic sense from the artiste. The aim of the dancer should perhaps be, like the composer's, to sublimate the sentiment of love. The approach has necessarily to be subtle and suggestive and no other art form in the world has such an eloquent language of gesture and expression that our dance enjoys, to do full justice to every nuance, every condition of that universal emotion—Love.

A CHALLENGE

It is often said that dancers of yesteryears commonly portrayed these Sringara padams with style and with a flair natural to their profession. In to-day's world of sophisticated stage performances, the presentation of such dances is more challenging, for the trend has drifted down to disproportionate speed in both dance and music, with a penchant for melodrama in an over-zealous attempt to gain instant popularity. The rendering of a traditional padam in its correct tempo, and the delineation of abhinaya to suit the mood of the song in a leisurely manner, the two—music and movement—complementing each other to create "Rasa" is like an oasis in the desert of contemporary verve-and-vigour dance, with its goal of cultural over-kill.

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An Ancient Bhagavata Mela Dance Drama Festival

BY

K. L. RAMAN

[Assistant Secretary, Tamilnadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram]

Melattur is a small village of medium size about 18 km north east of Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu. The village still remains unspoiled and its people are unsophisticated and unaffected by the modern innovations in their daily life. So much so, it remains a typical Indian village. Approximately a mile away from the north of the village flows a tributary of the Cauvery river. The village is surrounded on all sides by green and fertile paddy fields and has four ponds also on four sides. It has three long streets with two rows of houses, mostly occupied by Brahmin families, some of whom claim to be the descendants of the original beneficiaries of the huge lands and other properties benevolently endowed by King Achyuthappa Nayak of Thanjavur and his successors. All around these three Brahmin streets, there are six other streets also occupied by others, mainly agriculturists.

THE TEMPLE

On the western end of the northern Brahmin Street, is the temple of the lord Sree Lakshmi Narasimhamoorthy. At the eastern end of the street, Sri Venkatarama Sastriar, the author of several prestigious and immortal dance dramas of Bhagavatha Mela type, is said to have lived. Though he belonged to

the cult of Saivism, yet he was a great worshipper of Lord Narasimhamoorthy, a powerful god of the followers of the Vaishnava cult.

It is in front of this temple that the annual dance drama festival-Bhagavata Mela—is conducted as part of the Narasimha Jayanthi, which generally falls in the latter half of May or the first week of June every year.

THREE PLAYS

As one connected with the Tamilnadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram for the last two decades and as an avid research student in the Tamil theatre movement, I had the good fortune of witnessing the above dance drama festival in Melattur from 27-5-80 to 3-6-80. Sri Prahaladha, Harischandra, Sri Markandeyar were the dance dramas which were enacted on the above dates. Sri Venkatarama Sastriar of Melattur who lived 175 years ago and who was a senior contemporary of Saint Thyagaraja had really done invaluable service for the development and popularity of these dance dramas. Critics and experts point out that this art reached its pinnacle of glory during the lifetime of the above illustrious saint composer. The dance dramas that are enacted here and a few other villages in Thanjavur are

in Telugu and they are his original works and compositions.

STAGE SETTINGS

A thatched pandal, about 100 feet in length, with a small stage at its eastern end was put up in front of the temple, barely 20 feet in width. The stage erected there was 15 feet in length and 12 feet in breadth and 15 feet in height. The dance dramas were enacted on this small stage in the presence of the decorated deity of Sri Narasimhamoorthi, installed in the front hall of the temple.

The vast crowds and onlookers gathered there to witness these dance dramas squatted on the street floor within the long and narrow pandal. Every play commenced at 10 p.m. in the night and continued till 2 a.m., except in the case of the play, Prahalada, which ran through out the night till day-break. It is learnt from the organisers of the above festival that till 1951 all the dance dramas were conducted throughout the night until dawn. It was at the suggestion of the veteran, the late E. Krishna Iyer, that the duration of the other plays, except Prahalada, was limited to four or five hours.

E. KRISHNA IYER'S CONTRIBUTION

At this juncture, one cannot but thankfully recall the yeoman services rendered by the late E. Krishna Iyer, founder and former Secretary of the Tamilnadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram and also a great veteran dancer and an acknowledged authority on Bharathanatyam, for the revival and resuscitation of this ancient and traditional theatre. It was on account of his active association and inimitable attachment to this art, that the popularity

of this ancient and traditional art spread far and wide.

SCOPE FOR RESEARCH

Several scholars and research students in dance and theatre movement not only from several parts of India but also from distant countries flock to this village during this time to witness the dance dramas and evaluate its importance and also to make a comparative study of this temple theatre with other ancient and traditional theatres prevailing in other countries of the world. Miss De Moore, a research scholar in temple theatre, deputed by the British Broadcasting Corporation, London, came here during 1977 and stayed in this small village for about 7 days and witnessed all the dance dramas enacted during this festival. It was at my suggestion and direction that her trip to Melattur and stay etc. was arranged. Despite the innumerable personal problems that she faced during her stay in Melattur, she immensely enjoyed the dance dramas and had highlighted the value and importance of this traditional temple theatre in her article submitted to the B.B.C.

EXPERTS' VIEWS

Mr. Richard Frasca, an American and a close friend of mine, who has been doing research in Therukoothu and other folk arts of South India also visited Melattur at my request and witnessed the above dance dramas. He originally planned to stay there for one day only, but fascinated by the alluring charm and striking impact of these dance dramas, he stayed till the end of the festival and tape recorded all the dance dramas. He had taken innumerable photos of the several sequences of the dance dramas

staged. At the end of the festival, he remarked that Bhagavatha Mela Dance Drama tradition is an answer to those who are sceptical about the possibility and existence of any ancient theatre in our country, as they feel that the link between the ancient and modern theatres in India had completely snapped. I fully endorse his view that Bhagavatha Mela Dance Drama tradition at Melattur is a surviving link and quite a strong link between ancient and modern theatre. Though this art is confined to a few villages in Thanjavur district, it cannot be dismissed as just a mere regional art of the South, nor can it be classified as only a rural folk art. It will also be too presumptuous to consider that it had its origin in or evolved from any earlier folk play.

FOLK ART OR CLASSICAL?

There is a controversy among present day critics, dancers and Nattuvanars whether Bhagavatha Mela dances can be classified as folk-lore or a semi-classical art. The late E. Krishna Iyer was emphatic that this art is purely classical. Kathakali might have developed from earlier folk arts as is evident from its realism and some of its persisting folk features. Some experts opine that Kuchipudi is an art evolved or developed from the earlier folk drama of Yakshagana. On the analogy of such developments of other types of dance dramas in other parts of India, some writers surmise that the Bhagavatha Mela dance dramas too might have evolved from earlier folk plays of Tamilnadu.

CLASSICAL LINKS

A close and careful study of the Bhagavatha Mela dance dramas and their

tradition will reveal that they do not have the slightest semblance of the folk element in any of its features, viz., diction, music, dance abhinaya, or even showmanship. On the contrary, the Bhagavatha Mela dance drama has been and is simply a revival of the ancient Natya conception enunciated in Bharatha's Natya Sastra, the earliest and most authoritative treatise on Indian classical dance and drama. According to Bharatha Muni, Natya means only a dance drama, neither dance alone nor drama alone. It seeks to expound a puranic story by enacting it as a drama on the stage by characters in appropriate costumes with classical music, dance and abhinaya and also dialogues wherever necessary. This Natya tradition was widely prevalent all over India till Kalidasa's time or a little later. All Sanskrit plays were produced till that time as dance-dramas.

Afterwards, this dance drama tradition unaccountably seems to have gone slowly out of existence in this country, but to have spread to some of the East Asian countries like Java, Bali, Cambodia, Siam and Indonesia. It still flourishes there, of course with local colouring and variations; and stories from the immortal epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are being enacted there even to-day.

NARAYANA THIRTHA

Narayana Thirtha yogi, a scholar and saint from Andhra Pradesh who migrated to Tamilnadu in the latter half of the 16th century A.D. and who settled down at Varakur, a neighbouring village in Thanjavur, composed his immortal and monumental lyric "Krishna Leela Tharangini" (Sanskrit). His songs or compositions are called Tharangams and are

well suited and adapted to dance and abhinaya. It was he who first gave full shape also to the revival of the ancient Natta tradition by developing the earlier opera form into the full-fledged dance-drama form.

In the process of its reshaping and developing, he did not discover anything new. He had no need to look into any earlier folk play for inspiration and imagination, apparently he was an adept, fully acquainted with the technique of the ancient classical dance and drama as elaborated in Bharatha's Natta Sastra. He was himself a good musician and he had the model of numerous classical Sanskrit plays to guide him. He was a great scholar in Sanskrit and Telugu. With such a background and knowledge, he composed a number of dance dramas in Telugu, such as, "Parjathapaharamam" "Rukmangadha" and also a few other pada varnas. He followed the tenets and ways of the Bhakthi movement as found in the Bhagavatha literature.

THE DIFFERENCE

Deep conviction in God and practice of Bhakthi by saints and yogis resulted in the production of many prestigious and priceless compositions like "Geetha Govindam" and "Ashtapathi" by Jayadeva in the 12th century. Saint Purandaradasa in the 16th century and later Saint Thyagaraja in the 18th century were responsible for bringing out several immortal and incomparable kritis and compositions in Carnatic Music which are sung widely to-day. But Saint Theerthanarayana seems to have felt that devotion alone could not become perfect, unless and until puranic stories with spiritual and philosophic truths were enacted through dance dramas or dramas

embellished with classical music, dance, abhinaya and Bharathanatyam technique. These dance dramas thrived well in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries on account of the royal patronage extended to them by the Nayak rulers of Thanjavur and also by the local Zamindars and Mirasdars who had genuine interest in and admiration for this art.

THE TRADITION CONTINUED

The tradition set up by Theerthanarayana was followed by his followers of later generations. One of them, Gopalakrishna Sastriar, composed four or five dance dramas viz. "Durvacharithra" "Sita Kalyanam", "Rukmani Kalyanam" "Gowari" etc. But his illustrious son Venkatarama Sastriar who was an erudite scholar in Telugu and Sanskrit produced 12 masterly dance drama pieces, namely Prahalada, Markandeya, Harischandra, Usha Parinayam, Rukmangadha, Rukmini Kalyanam, Gollabhama, Sita Kalyanam, Kamsavadha, Sivarathri Vaibhavam, Druva Charithram and Basmasura Vadham. Of these, Prahalada has been rated as the best, from the point of view of diction, music, Bhakthi and other features. Usha Parinayam is full of Sringara rasas as it depicts the leelas of Lord Krishna with Gopikas and his consorts. Prahalada, Harischandra Usha Parinayam, Rukmangada, Markandeya are some of the popular dance dramas that are repeated in Melattur, year after year. Sri Venkatarama Sastriar was also noted for his musical compositions like kritis, varnas and svara-jathis. It is said that even Saint Thyagaraja had a great admiration for his musical compositions and dance dramas, and that he was inspired by the dance dramas of Venkatarama Sastriar in the production

of his two operas, namely, Nowka Charitha and Prahalada Bakthi Vijayam.

The popularity and fame of the dance dramas of Venkatarama Sastriar became so widespread that five other villages in Tanjore District, besides Melattur, opted to follow the tradition. They were Soolamangalam, Oothukadu, Nallur, Saliamangalam and Thepperumanallur. In all these six villages including Melattur, the dance dramas used to be enacted annually as a part of the Narasimha Jayanthi festival in the month of May or June within their respective precincts or in the streets in front of them.

NAMES TO BE CONJURED WITH

Soolamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, Natesa Iyer of Melattur, Seetharama Bhagavathar, Swami Bhagavathar of Oothukadu were famous and well known in the previous generation as a few among the veteran dancer actors and master conductors of these dance dramas. Balu Bhagavathar of Melattur, the only surviving veteran dance actor and conductor of these dance dramas for several years, who is now more than 82, is suffering in abject poverty and disillusionment. I met him in his little house in the village where he is staying with his widowed sister and gathered a lot of information and knowledge about this tradition. He is the recipient of the award of the Central Sangeet Nataka Akademi which had been conferred on him in recognition of his meritorious contribution and service to this art. It is really painful to see that such a great artiste is living in difficulties on the meagre pension of Rs. 75/- p.m. offered by the Government.

Another Nattuvangam expert and assistant to Balu Bhagavathar by name,

Ramani Iyer, expired in April 1980. He was held in high esteem for his deep and detailed knowledge of Nattuvangam and choreography. He is also a recipient of the award from the Tamilnadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram.

FADING OFF

By efflux of time, the above tradition fell into disuse and slowly faded away in Soolamangalam, Nallur and Oothukadu. But in Thepperumanallur and Sattiamangalam, the tradition is kept up but not to the expected or desired level. On account of the deteriorating social and economic conditions in the villages and the dire need of the artistes to seek their livelihood in places far outside their villages, the Bhagavatha Mela tradition has gradually disappeared in these villages one after another, except in Melattur which has been able to keep this art surviving in its most authentic and appreciable form. So much so, the art is now being identified with the village itself as Melattur Bhagavatha Mela dance drama.

RICH IN MUSIC

Let me now dwell on other aspects of this dance drama style. To me it appears that much of the richness of these dance dramas emanates from their songs. When the emotional context of a play is rich, it is conducive to music and dance and attains depth. And when characters and situations are well described in words, dialogues could be made lively and entertaining. Most of these plays deal with conflicts arising out of love and hate or out of vanity and hate. There is enough pathos also.

THE RUN OF THE PLAY

The songs of these plays have been composed with an eye for dance. A play usually commences with the debut of "Konangi" (Vidushaka or Funster) He dances for a few moments in a comical manner and beseeches the spectators to witness the play in silence by crying out "Saddu" "Saddu". He then goes off the stage. Then all the musicians who provide background music (vocalists and instrumentalists) appear and sing together the invocation song and then Prahalada Pattabisheka Soddam. It is embellished with many scintillating solukuttu. Then comes the dance of Lord Ganesan. It appears in every Bhagavatha Mela dance drama and is performed so that the day's show may go off without any hitch or obstacle.

Every chief character appears first behind a laced cloth spread like a curtain vertically before him and held on the two sides by two persons. This act of introduction of the main characters on the stage in the ayidra corresponds with the Therukoothu plays. The Bhagavatha Mela dance dramas, though mostly classical in music, dance and abhinaya and showmanship, are not devoid of certain folk features. "Patra pravesam" meaning introduction of the chief characters of the play by themselves one by one is an important feature in Bhagavatha Mela dance dramas. After the conclusion of "Patra Pravesam" the play unfolds scene by scene. The sentiments are expressed loudly in classical music in Karnataka tradition and dance and abhinaya in Bharatha Natya technique and occasionally with poetic speeches and dialogues and appropriate dramatic action too. Padyas, Darus, Sabdhas, Churukas, Padas and pada varnas are the various forms of musical composition employed.

They are saturated with raga-bhava and embellished with fine gamakas and graces.

BLEND OF POETRY AND DANCE

Such songs along with soliloquies and dialogues in poetic diction blend with dance and abhinaya at every stage. The interpretation of song and speech with significant, hand gestures and facial expressions synchronises with rhythmic foot work. In the Melattur dance drama, one cannot miss the exhilarating effect of the dominance of dance and rhythm, besides being subdued in tone with the restraint and dignity, grace, and refinement pertinent to Bharatha Natya and particularly in its music, dance, drama. Violent scenes such as war and killing are not exhibited on the stage. They are only narrated off the stage.

The present master conductor of Melattur Natakas is G. Krishnamoorthi Sarma who has been extensively trained by Balu Bhagavathar and Ramani Iyer. In view of the ripe old age of Balu Bhagavathar and his inability to withstand the strain of sitting and singing for the long duration of the plays and in view of the recent demise of Ramani Iyer, G. Krishnamoorthi Sarma with the assistance of supporting musicians, viz., Veeraraghavan and Srinivasaraghavan (who have mellifluous voice, and elegant style) and other accompanying instrumentalists conducted the dance dramas this year with a great dedication and effortless ease. In view of his sincere and dedicated service for this art for the last four decades, the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi or the Tamilnadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram may consider the conferment of an award on him.

Till 1979, chief hero actors like Hiranayakaspur, Harischandra and Bhanasura

were played by G. Swaminathan, a born actor with striking personality. He is the recipient of the State award from the Tamilnadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram. It is distressing and painful that such a brilliant actor lost the power of speech last year in view of the surgery effected on his throat for the removal of the cancer-affected parts. Swaminathan's second son S. Kumar, who is aged 22, dons the roles of his father. Let us hope that he will excel his father in acting soon.

FEMALE ROLES

The main female characters of the dance dramas are being played by G. Natarajan (a maintenance engineer employed in Dubai) the eldest son of G. Swaminathan for the last 25 years. He is also a recipient of the State Award from the Tamilnadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram. His charming figure and graceful and effective dance-cum-acting have considerably enhanced the quality of the shows. His face and physique are so admirably suited to female roles. Ganesan, Sundaram, Krishnamoorthi and a host of others including certain young boys are in supporting cast.

FINANCE

The considerable expenses of the annual art festival are generally met by contributions from the local people and outsiders and also from the annual grants extended by the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi and the Tamilnadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram. In recent years the collections and contributions

from the public have fallen considerably in view of the economic conditions and the fall in the standard of life of the people. The deficiency or shortage is made up by the office bearers of the above Nataka Sangam.

In this connection, it is only proper to mention the dominant and dedicated role played by Thiru V. Ganesa Iyer and his family for the conduct of this festival. Their loyalty and dedication to this art is an enviable trait to be imbibed by all us. Starting a school for the systematic training of young boys and men in the art and to recruit more dance actors, and provision of the means of livelihood to some of the prominent artistes near their own village are some of the moves which can help to sustain and invigorate this ancient classical art.

FUTURE DARK

At the same time, the future of this delightful art gives cause for anxiety, as it is confined to the above troupe. The modern theatre and the ubiquitous films catering to the art needs of the masses, are formidable challengers. The value and importance of this traditional theatre do not seem to have been adequately realised and consequently adequate patronage is not forthcoming for these plays. It is time that in the interest of preserving and developing the precious dance drama tradition for the benefit of the large masses of the people, substantial help and encouragement are extended to this art form by the Government and the art loving public.



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Bharata Natya's Corrective Potential

BY

SMT. SUDHARANI RAGHUPATHY, M.A.

How does one evaluate the culture of a nation? By what standards do we say that a person is cultured or not? What is the measuring rod of culture which an individual aspires for? Suppose the flower were to represent a civilization, then the fragrance would be its culture. Culture is that elusive something which blossoms with civilization; it manifests itself at every stage of development of the human mind from the *primitive* to the present time. The products of culture are the various handiworks of man. When the basic necessities like hunger and sleep are satisfied, man turns towards amusement and recreation. Hence, the birth of art. Being a rational animal, the creative instinct in him is triggered, then with his developed brain he creates newer and newer things both for practical use and amusement, hence civilization grows and culture develops.

DANCE A VITAL ART FORM

Dance has been a vehicle of culture from times immemorial. It was not only a means to propitiate the gods but also an entertainment for various social functions like birth, marriage, death etc. With the passage of time, the dances acquired new forms and became more and more systematised. There sprung folk, tribal and ritual dances, and the more sophisticated court and classical dances. To-day, dance all over the world has reached a

height of perfection and finesse and has evolved into such a great art, that it has become one of the major factors representing the culture of a country. In fact Bharata Natyam of South India is considered one of the most highly developed arts in the world and a very vital form of art reflecting the ancient culture of India.

A POPULAR ART

Since the art of dance is audio-visual, certain standards of beauty are considered necessary for a dancer; also perfection of the limbs. The female form has always fascinated man, including sculptors, painters and poets alike, and the female dancer seems to be more prominent in the field of dance, though of course there are male-dancers also. (There are dances for solo dances, dances for pairs, group dances and community dances where the whole village or community takes part. From this we understand how popular dancing is whether classical, folk, modern or jazz in our society of the 20th century.)

Rhythm and movement are the life-breath of dance. At some time or other each one of us has exhibited our emotions through movement. Rhythm and movement are born with us & a systematised and stylised form of movement synchronised with rhythm acquired through

training, becomes the dance as an entertainment projected on the stage.

DEFECTIVE ANATOMIES

Can all of us dance? Why, for that matter, do all of us walk, run, jump in the normal way known to us since creation? Can we say that since 'God created Man in his own image', we are all perfect? According to Darwin's theory, man occupies the highest rung in the ladder of evolution. Why then do we see deformities? The human child is said to be the most helpless of living things, it has to be fed and nurtured for quite a few years till the child becomes independent. Why then are deformed children born? Many reasons have been given:—1. Genes, 2. Intermixing of blood through repeated marriages within the family, 3. Diseases, 4. Malnutrition, 5. Drugs etc. The result is that the child is not accepted by society and is unable to become part of it. For no reason of his own, it is rejected.

THERAPEUTIC VALUE

Can this be prevented, can this problem be overcome? Great strides have been made to overcome the deformities in the field of medicine. Is this possible through dance? Since it is a physical involvement, can it be used as a corrective for the deformities? An inferiority complex develops in the deformed child because it feels different from other children. The poor child can regain part of his self-confidence through the expression of dynamic, co-ordinated movements wiping out the inferior feeling generated within the child and also in the parents. It should also help to boost the morale of the parents of the afflicted children.

It is so important that the parents are in the right frame of mind so as to guide the children to feel normal.

Dance as a medium of recreation and the glamour it commands are one thing; the training behind it, is entirely another. Dance is a strict discipline. A finished dancer is the product of very hard concentrated work, not all glamorous but aesthetically beautiful and mentally satisfying. Can the movements be incorporated and used as a probable corrective? A dancer is said to be the most co-ordinated person in the world. Can part of this co-ordination be achieved by the deformed children?

A YOGA

Bharata Natyam is considered one of the most beautiful forms of dance in the world. Why, it is a Yoga in itself. Yoga in India from times immemorial is considered as the best prescription for good health and great western artists like Mr. Yehudi Menuhin have acknowledged its benefits. It also offers a unique corrective for many physical and mental ailments. Bharata Natyam is an art wherein every part of the body is used, eyebrows, cheek muscles, toes and so on.

THE NATYASAstra

The earliest & greatest treatise on the art is Bharata's Natya Sastra, a monumental work that deals with all aspects of dance, drama and theatre. As one reads through the pages of the Natya Sastra, one wonders at the variety of every possible movement of the body and limbs conceived of by man and so methodically systematised and codified by the sage. It is no wonder then, that when we view the various styles of dance in the world, similarities

in some of the movements are recognised. Bharata lays down the number of movements for the eyes, eye-brows, cheek muscles, waist, hip, chest, shoulders, knees and what not. Dance then, is a good exercise for the development of the body.

There can be no dance without music, music is an integral part of dance. Music can be very soothing to the nerves. Why, our tradition has it that when a great musician sang a particular melody, it brought rain and another musician's melody melted the crystal and so on. If nature could be stirred with music, then surely the rational mind of man can also be made to react. We have, melodies for the different times of the day, for the different seasons and so on. They touch the depths of the soul. Hence Bharata Natya is referred to as an audio-visual experience.

ALLROUND BENEFITS

With the above factors in mind if we analyse the role of dance, we find that dance helps in:—

1. Concentration.
2. Exercising of limbs.
3. Acceleration of circulation.
4. Correction of certain faults.
5. Physical & mental growth since growth is part of childhood.
6. Relaxation of the body & mind.
7. Stirring the imagination of the child. A child lives in a world of fantasy. ~~After~~ in wonderland. Dance also is a world of fantasy which is meaningful and gives an opportunity for self-expression.

A combination of all these factors, may have a therapeutic value. Hence the experiment to teach dance, i.e., Bharata natya along with proper exercise, breathing, diet etc., may bring worthwhile results.

Actually dance should be taught as part of deportment *Callisthenics*, not just for its therapeutic value for afflicted persons, but also for the development of beautiful human beings with a healthier and broader outlook on life, creating a sensitivity and an awareness of the outside.

IN JAPAN

Such a school seems to exist in Japan. It is called 'Tokushu Gako' meaning special school. This is Japan's special physical culture for primary and secondary school children. There are institutions for each of the following:—a. Eye, b. Mentally retarded, c. Deaf, d. Delicate children, e. Physically deformed.

The purpose of these schools is to make the children physically independent and to gradually integrate themselves in social and professional activities. Shiju Oka provincial Government runs a special school called Urishiyama for physically deformed children. It has spacious airy buildings with plenty of light, also if necessary, the walls could be removed to make the rooms into a hall. Pulleys and levers are used and also bar exercises. Music and movements are also taught. The Japanese are basically a very artistic people, they convert everything into a work of art. So even here the atmosphere is made beautiful for the children to

combine work and pleasure, to reach the goal—*correction*.

A question may be asked: why choose *Bharata Natyam*? The answer is that it seems to be the most balanced of dance forms as an author wrote: Bharata Natya is a composite art of rhythm, music, poetry, colour, sculptural poses, suspension of movement, symmetry and everything in beautiful balance.

Hence this experiment of teaching dance can be tried not only in pursuit of aesthetics but as a therapy especially for children. In my experience as a humble teacher in this field, a moderate success has been noted in the affected pupils. Time will prove how much more successfully this experiment can be harnessed to correct deformities in young and old—*With acknowledgments to The Hindu in which parts of this essay appeared.*



FORM IV

(See Rule 8 of Press & Registration of Books Act)

1. Place of its Publication ... Plot 292, Jayshankar Yagnik Marg, Bombay-400 022.
2. Periodicity of its Publication ... Quarterly.
3. Printer's & Publisher's Name ... R. V. Murthy.
Nationality ... Indian.
Address ... Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, Bombay-400 022
4. Editor's Name ... K. S. Mahadevan.
Nationality ... Indian.
Address ... Plot 30 Krishnapuri Raja Annamalaipuram Madras-600 028
5. Name and address of individuals who own the newspaper and partner or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital. ... Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, Plot 292, Jayshankar Yagnik Marg, Bombay-400 022.

I, R. V. Murthy, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date: 1-7-80.

(Sd.) R.V. Murthy
Signature of Publisher.

BHARATA NATYA

Verses by
Pururu Balakrishnan
To The Uninitiated

Bharata Natya—
it is, yes it is
the pristine
classical
Indian dance—
a synthesis
aesthetic
musical
symbolical
of gesture
posture
and motion
and finest nuance
of emotion
that is *bhava*.
All that is fine,
very fine,
but I opine
a small dose of it is divine
But too much of it—
I must admit
I'm sorry—
is too much really.

K.UMB. SRIJATHA SRINIVASAN

BHARATA NATYA

To The Initiated

Praise be to Bharata, father
of this maiden, lovely, tender,
petalline
serpentine
swan-like
peacock-like
erotic
ecstatic
mystic.
No, she is not one!
She is many.
as many
as our *sastras*,
as many
as our *talas*,
as many
as our *ragas*,
in permutation
and combination,
incarnated
in the form feminine,
filling the body rhythm-possessed
like winking wine.
Our ancients held
each note a goddess.
I knew this, yes,
when I beheld
the music three-fold
of *raga*, *bhava*, and *tala*
step out
in Bharata Natya
in a breathing feminine,
Exuding the *rasa* tune.



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Prince of the Tamil Theatre—R. S. Manohar

BY

K. S. MAHADEVAN

"The theatre is the noblest of the Arts, a metaphysical ritual, an unbound volume of erotica, a child-like festival of clowns and kings, a never surfeiting banquet for the eye, the ear and at times the soul" wrote Mr. T. E. Kalem, the modern James Agate of the Western theatre.

Much of that aphorism applies to Sri R. S. Manohar, the selfless captain and leader of that fine troupe "National Theatres" founded on 14th November 1954. Recently, National Theatres celebrated their Silver Jubilee. A Committee with Mr. Justice Mohan as the Chairman, Mr. V. Emberumanar Chetty as Secretary and members like Messrs. C. R. Pattabhiraman, M. A. M. Ramaswamy, D. V. Narayanaswami (Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Eiyal Isai Nataka Manram), V. P. V. Rajan, Editor of the *The Mail*, was formed for the purpose. The function went off brilliantly in April 1980.

THE GREAT TRADITION

Manohar is squarely of that generation of Titans like Cunniah Co (Who discovered the great virtuoso S. G. Kittappa), Nawab Rajamanickam, Madura Original Boys Co., T. K. S. Brothers etc. He has a very emotive relationship with the theatre,

a relationship that far transcends mere financial considerations. In this respect, he resembles the late Prithviraj Kapoor. No greater proof of this quality is necessary than the fact that, even today, although he acts in many films and could very well afford to subsist on it, he still keeps the flag of National Theatres flying aloft and there is not a stage in Madras today which does not put on boards his plays like "Ottakkoothar", "Dronar" etc.

His troupe has a very large complement of actors and workers and to date they have the singular distinction of having produced 21 memorable plays, staged on 4800 occasions in various parts of the South as well as Malaysia and Singapore and sometimes under near-impossible conditions. So large a contingent and the gargantuan scale of the plays, with their dazzling scenes and stage effects on a Cecil B. Demille scale, entail a huge financial investment, and seldom has Manohar broken even, though his takings are often a record. The fact is that the welfare of his troupe is as dear to Manohar as his own name and prestige and as a highly demanding practitioner of this art, he has always demanded that his troupe put in hard work. The economics of stage productions is staggering as may be seen from the calculation that the production cost of a play is anywhere around Rs. 55,000 and it takes

him about 100 plays to emerge from the red!

DAZZLING PLAYS

The formidable list of his mammoth productions Ilankeswaran (*Ravana*), Dronar, Soorapadman, Vishwamitra, Sukracharar, Duryodhanan, Parashuramar, Chanakya etc., shows his partiality for mythological and historical plays. As Manohar himself stated when interviewed by Mr. P. C. Ramakrishna for the "*Hindu*" recently, his handling of these plays often shows a departure from the normally accepted historic versions. The deviation is deliberate of course, but according to Manohar, firstly, it is based on historical research which to him has often revealed, like the discovery of the other side of the moon, a different and more human angle; secondly, the slight twist gives greater scope for characterisation by which he sets a lot of store (one has only to witness "*Chanakya*" to convince oneself how successfully Manohar can handle a difficult theme); thirdly, introduction of a new angle lends the mythological story a certain tang and verve which the audience relishes as pure entertainment.

CREATIVE

Manohar's intention apparently is to provide a large composite form in which histrionics and imagination can combine at the highest level of the dramatic art. His plays are not mere symbols of excellent craftsmanship, but are suffused with a

new light shed by his creative imagination on the whole play and acquiring a certain uniqueness in the event. Just as Shakespeare's genius could create immortal characters out of fallible human beings, a jealous Moor and a wavering Prince, so too could Manohar, by dexterous handling, make Duryodhanan, Ravana, etc. the unmitigated ogres of our traditional mythology, more human, more acceptable characters. What Manohar is as an artist *non pareil*, can possibly validate whatever he does. In Henrik Ibsen's last play, *Rubeck*, the artist, in the last scene, climbs to the top of a mountain and is received into the everlasting snows. That could be Manohar's stage ambition too.

Meanwhile, on a mundane level, it does appear rather strange that so dedicated an actor and producer who more than most is sustaining dramatic art in the South, is not getting the accepted symbols of Governmental recognition. The Central Sangeet Natak Akademi, and for that matter, even the Tamil Nadu Government, are yet to show due appreciation of Manohar's immense contribution to the Southern stage. This is a regrettable state of affairs. One cannot help feeling that dance, music and films are having more than their share of encouragement and support from the Central and State authorities despite much that is shoddy, silly and dowdy in them. It is high time that the high noon of Manohar's acting and directing ability is realised and rewarded in appropriate fashion.



Indian Music—Whither Integration?

BY

HEMLATA ANJANEYLU

It is accepted by experts and laymen alike that Indian Music, now divided into Hindustani and Carnatic systems, was only one till the beginning of the 14th century. The mention of the terms 'Hindustani' and 'Carnatic' appears for the first time in Haripal's treatise "*Sangeet Sudhakar*", written between 1309 and 1312 A.D. Prior to this, the whole thing was called *Carnata Sangeet*—one which was sweet to the ear.

It was the political upheavals of the time and the fall of the Bahamani empire that forced the musicians to move out in search of new pastures to eke out a living. The rulers at Delhi and Agra and the chieftains of smaller principalities patronised these artists.

Indian music in the Northern region came under the influence of Persian-Arabic music and poetry. But the music in the South retained its traditional character throughout these centuries.

Change in Character

The *Margi* character of the music in the North slowly underwent considerable change. It was now being called *Hindustani Music*. *Dhrupad*, *Dhamar*, *Nom-tom*, *Kertan* and its devotional form started losing popularity. Instead of *Blakiti*, *Sringara* became the dominant rasa of the compositions. *Thumri*, *Dadra*, *Hori*,

Tappa, and compositions written in *Braj-bhasha* and *Avadhi*, instead of *Sanskrit* were patronised at the royal courts. Folk compositions like *Kajri*, *Poorbidhan* were now gaining popularity.

By the middle of the 19th century, with the improvement in the means of communication, a feeling began to gain ground in music circles that something should be done to bridge the widening gulf between the two systems. By now, there was a realisation that the difference was only in the form.

South reacts—Dikshitar

The South was quick to react, *Muthuswami Dikshitar* (1776-1835), one of the Trinity of Carnatic Music, and *Maharaja Swati Tirunal* of Travancore were the pioneers to take the first steps in this direction.

Chidambaranath Yogi of Benaras met *Dikshitar* at Manali and took him along with him to Benaras. *Dikshitar* stayed there for five years. The serenity and the slow movement of the *Dhrupad* singing appealed to him most. In his compositions written during this period, one finds the impact of this influence.

Dikshitar adapted some of the *Hindustani* ragas to the *Carnatic* system, and composed songs in *Sanskrit* for them; notable among these ragas are *Jayawanti*

(Dwijawanti), Yaman Kalyan (Yamunakalyani), Brindawani Sarang, Paraj, Kedar, Bhag, Kafi, Bhairavi and so on.

Swati Tirunal

Mharata Swati Tirunal welcomed and patronised musicians from North India in his court. A linguist and a vocalist himself, Swati Tirunal composed songs in Sanskrit, Telugu, Malayalam, Marathi, Urdu and Hindi and rendered them into music also. He wrote many a Dhrupad, Khayal and Tappa too. He has used ragas like *Vibhas* for his devotional songs.

After the pioneering work of Muthuswami Dikshitar and Swati Tirunal, a colossal effort was undertaken in the 'thirties' and 'forties' of this century by Vishnu Digambar Paluskar and Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande, on their own.

V. D. Paluskar

Vishnu Digambar Paluskar had a gifted, sweet and high-pitched voice. He set to music devotional bhajans of saint poets like Meera, Tuls and Surdas in classical ragas and travelled throughout the length and breadth of the country giving concerts. During his visit to the South, Parur Sundaram Aiyar of Madras, a violinist of repute, was so impressed by Paluskar's music that he went to Poona and stayed with him for some years, mastering the Hindustani style. His son, M. S. Gopalakrishnan, is continuing the same interest now.

V. N. Bhatkhande

Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande, a lawyer by profession, utilised his spare time in collecting compositions from musicians

Pandits as well as Ustads. He recorded them whenever possible, prepared the notations for them. He classified the raga-ragini system into THAT and the derivative ragas. He published all this material in seven volumes in the series "Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati: Kramik Pustakamala".

Conferences

Apart from this, he organised music conferences and seminars and got music colleges opened at Lucknow, Gwalior and other places. The Marris College of Hindustani Music has now changed into Bhatkhande University and Madho Sangeet Vidyalyaya into Mahavidyalaya, imparting training to students upto the Ph.D. courses. Bhatkhande's Kramik Pustakamala series has proved the biggest asset to Indian Musicians. In the majority of music colleges and music centres, they are taken as text books for a systematic study of music.

Bhatkhande came to Madras and other centres in the South to meet the leading artists, had discussions with them and gathered some information and where possible, compositions.

Abdul Karim Khan

Slowly, musicians started taking interest in the development of music in the South. Ustad Abdul Kareem Khan, founder of the *Kirana Gharana*, spent some considerable time in Madras. Apart from giving performances, he used to have discussions with artists like Veena Dhanammal and others. He was much impressed by the phrasing of swars while singing tans. He started using swars along with his bol-tans and popularised it in the north. Like Dikshitar, he adapted some of the Car-

natic ragas to Hindustani style like *Abhogi*, *Vasantamukhari*, *Hamsadhvani* and so on.

MUTUAL EXCHANGE

The interest in mutual exchange of ragas started gaining momentum as the time passed. People wanted to know and hear more and more of the other style. Hence, sometime later, in Madras, a group of musicians joined with G. N. Balasubramanyam to invite Hindustani artists like Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Ustad Abdul Kareem Khan and others to Madras. Both Kareem Khan and Bade Ghulam Ali were a great draw. They stayed here for months together at a stretch giving whole-night concerts practically every evening.

This interest of a group of Carnatic musicians and music lovers like Y. G. Duraiswami crystallised into the Hindustani Music Circle. This Association was responsible for inviting stalwarts like Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan, Ustad Amir Khan, Ustad Vilayat Hussain Khan and others to Madras.

ATTRACTION OF GAMAKA

Ustad Amir Khan was greatly impressed by the use of *Gamaka* in Carnatic music. He incorporated this into his vilambit style. His Vilambit + gamaka dominated alap tans are the craze of contemporary Hindustani artists.

A rare example of an ordinary man's effort in complete identification will not be out of place here.

About five decades ago, there was a *Sarang* player in Madras. By name *Hindustani* music and made a mark. Bande Khan. Once when he had gone to

Guntur to accompany a songstress, Resham Jan, a young man from Tenali, by name *Prabala Satyanarayana* came to him with a desire to learn to play the instrument. He was so impressed by Bande Khan's Sarangi recital, that he came to Madras the next day leaving everything there. He came to Bande Khan and became his disciple. Once he took to learning Sarangi, he never looked back. He even changed his name to Abdullah.

SARANGI GOES SOUTH

He accompanied his Ustad everywhere — be it for composing music for films or for concerts in and around Madras. Impressed by his dedication over a period of more than thirty years, Bande Khan took him to North Indian centres of music and introduced him to all the musicians in those parts. He gave his Sarangi to his disciple before he breathed his last. Abdullah returned to Tenali in his last days. He taught the art to his brother, Subba Rao, and handed over to him the instrument before he called it a day. Subba Rao now settled in Madras, plays Sarangi and harmonium for films.

There are some more artists from the South like *Jonnasittala Sheshagiri Rao*, a talented singing actor on the Andhra Stage and *Vidhan Sheshagiri Rao* known as *S. R. Veda* who took to Hindustani music and music is popular in this part of the country.

CARNATIC MUSICIANS' INTEREST

There is a new trend among the Carnatic musicians now, who, after attaining mastery in Carnatic music, have taken to Hindustani music and made a mark. Notable among them are Susheta

Misra-gitar; Nambiar—vocal; Vanu Bai Ravi—vocal; Lakshmi Shankar—vocal; N. Rupan—violin; K. Sridhar—saxophone; K. Shivakumar—violin; Vijaya-Raghava Rao—flute; Manchala Jagannatha Rao—Vedina.

The reverse process is exemplified by Ustad Hafiz Ahmed Khan. After establishing himself in Hindustani field, he has started singing in Carnatic style.

ENTER 'VARNAM' IN NORTHERN MUSIC

Another notable contribution is that of late Pt. S. N. Ratanjankar who introduced *Varnam* into Hindustani music teaching, himself composing several *varnams* in Hindustani Ragas.

Pt. Ravi Shankar and Ustad Ali Akbar Khan have not only adapted Carnatic Ragas like *Carnatik*, *Sindhendramadhyanam*, *Keeravani* and so on, but have done experiments with Carnatic talas also for their performances.

Panchakshari Bhuva school of musicians at Gadag (Karnataka) are a rare phenomenon. Bhuva himself was a master of the two styles and he taught the same to his disciples. They either perform in two styles or perform in one and have a thorough knowledge of the other.

INTEGRATION

Apart from these efforts by individuals or groups in integrating the two systems organisations and institutions like the Music Academy, the Indian Fine Arts Society, Kalakshetra in Madras and the Shanmukhananda Sabha in Bombay have done a good job in promoting mutual understanding, for achieving integration. The Shanmukhananda Sabha conducts regular classes in Sitar. In the annual conferences of the Music Academy, the main-

ing sessions are devoted to Expert Committee discussions where musicians and musicologists from North India and foreign countries are invited. The Academy devotes one evening entirely to Hindustani music concert by any of the top musicians or instrumentalists.

THE S. G. S. SABHA

Since 1975, S. G. S. Sabha, under the leadership of Sri J. S. Prabhu, has started conducting music conferences mainly for Hindustani music. The first one or two sessions are devoted to Carnatic music and the rest for Hindustani music. These gestures have been well appreciated.

During those conferences the present writer had occasion to meet a couple of prominent musicians and scholars who had something substantial to say, about integration.

DIVERSE VIEWS ON INTEGRATION

One artist was of the opinion that these experiments will not yield any result and it is better they are given up. But for this single negative opinion, majority of them felt that such experiments should be made on a larger scale. They provide scope for enriching the repertoire which makes the music interesting. A few felt that it is necessary for sustaining creativity. Some felt that Carnatic musicians should know how to handle the mridangam as majority of the Hindustani performers know how to play the basic bols on the Tabla. A stalwart stressed that students should not perform on the stage unless they have completed their training, say, for five to six years at least. Another person felt that as there were no proper arrangements for

documentation of compositions and notations except by rote in the olden times, much is lost. Now, with the latest facilities available for these, one should take care to preserve the compositions with notations.

EXPERIMENTS CONTINUE

Whether scholars and musicians agree or differ, experiments in the field of integration are on the increase. But one has yet to have another Bhatkhande or a Dikshitar, a Swati Tirunal and a Ratanjankar. There are some, who in the name of bridging the gulf, want to get quick money and fame. A quick glance at the similar ragas and package programme of teaching does not make a disciple an expert in the other style.

Instant coffee can be made in a matter of minutes but music cannot be learnt in as many months. The road to success in music is a long and arduous one, involving sustained and strenuous effort—a *Sadhana* for a lifetime,—be it Hindustani or Carnatic. Music is a jealous mistress, hard to master. There are no short cuts to success here. Every note, every fraction of the rhythm and every word of the composition has to be perfected and presented in its proper shade and balance. Otherwise it can only be a jumble of notes or noises, not music.

A LOT TO BE DONE YET

Some spade work has been done during this century and a half by individuals, academies, sabhas, and institutions. But it is like a drop in the ocean. Much is still to be done. There are many corners undiscovered or semi-discovered like Gaudap, Ragoh, Khanagah and so on. Lot of field work is necessary. There should be enthusiasts who could carry on the work

started by Bhatkhande and others. It was the zeal of a Bhatkhande to do the work on his own. Now the Sangeet Natak Academy, Universities or such other centres of education should provide financial assistance and the necessary equipment for collection, documentation and notation.

More centres of higher research and practical training like the one sponsored by ITC at Calcutta should be started and opportunities given to the deserving candidates, who could be groomed into integrated artists.

DOCUMENTATION

Documentation of different styles, gharanas, sampradayas of singing and playing has to be done on a larger scale. All India Radio, the Sangeet Natak Academy and the N.C.P.A. at Bombay are doing a good job at it but the material is not easily available to serious students of music. Departments of Music should have their own archives of recordings and audio-visual tapes where research scholars can find the necessary material and work on them.

More conferences and seminars should be organised where musico-scientific projects could be properly discussed and artists, musicologists could meet and exchange their ideas. This will help avoiding duplication of effort. A deeper and more intensive probe into the causes for the bifurcation of the original system into two may also help to provide a *syncretic* solution to the problem.

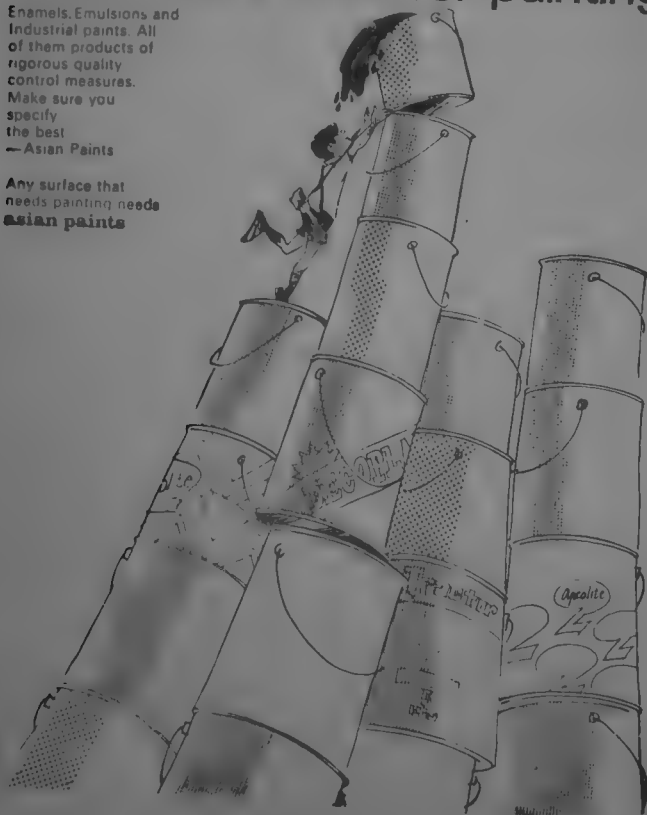
In these days of rapid mass communication Hindustani and Carnatic systems cannot hope to remain long in splendid isolation. The twain has to meet sooner or later.

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"A Great Teacher of Music"— Rangaramanuja Ayyangar

BY

S. PARTHASARATHY

"In the spring of 1962 he spent a few months in the United States, visiting a number of Universities. There was one reaction common to all who had the opportunity to sit with him in close and relaxed circumstances, be it for an hour or for a week: 'This man is a great teacher of music'".

A DISCERNING TRIBUTE

This tribute is from an American student who learnt Carnatic classical music from Rangaramanuja Ayyangar who passed away recently at Bombay at the age of 79. Knowing this student (Mr. Harold Powers of Pennsylvania University) personally, I have no hesitation in publicising this tribute. His knowledge of Carnatic classical music is so deep, his sensitivity to the subtle aspects of our music so great, his sincerity to learn so amazing, I have very often felt sad that our vidwans do not evince any abiding interest in music of which they claim to be votaries.

I can never forget the few days he came to me to hear some Kriti of Thyagaraja rendered in the way I and my wife had learnt from a "sisya parampara". They were naturally different from the ones heard on the platform. When he told me emphatically that our rendering of a Dhanvanti piece must have been the old and authentic *pata*, I was stunned. He noted down 4 or 5 pieces in rough notation (SRGM) and assured me he would let America know this *pata*. He

was so open-minded that he even accepted our version in preference to his own guru's. So much for the student.

THE ENGLISH TEACHER

I remember young Rangaramanujam almost from the day he arrived in Madras. Hailing from an orthodox Vaishnavite Brahmin family of Mannargudi (Tanjore Dt.) he had his education there and came to Madras after graduation. We met in the house of my uncle, the late Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar, former Editor of 'The Hindu'. Soon he had his training in teaching and had a long career as an English teacher in a High School in Madras. According to him, his father had bequeathed to him "a passion for music and devotion to religion as a way of life and a code of conduct". All the early years were spent in Tanjore District which nurtured not only the Musical Trinity but several high class musicians, vocal and instrumental. He had occasion to listen to some leading musicians like Komeranapuram Vaidyanatha Aiyar and Simizhi Sundaram Aiyar and this naturally shaped his ideas on Carnatic classical music.

VEENA DHANAMMAL

But his admiration for Veena Dhanammal as the repository of all that is best in our music, after he came to Madras, grew to the extent of devotion to a guru. We have met on a number of days sitting together in the stillness of Dhanammal's

house to listen to the strains from her Veena. Her music was of such an alluring and enduring type that stalwarts like Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar and Tirukodikaval Krishna Iyer would make it a point to listen to her Veena, at least once during their sojourns to Madras. Rangaramanujam naturally attempted to catch glimpses of her playing. One with so much knowledge of our music could have passed it on to a number of pupils here. His sharp tongue may possibly have kept people at a distance or he did not get a proper pupil. This is unfortunate indeed.

FALL IN STANDARDS

Belonging to his generation—I am only a few years younger—I can fully appreciate his feelings in the matter of deterioration of music standards. But I cannot understand how anyone can rectify it or reform it as he suggests in his book. There is no point in my saying that 60 years ago a rupee fetched four measures of rice while now a Kilogram costs three rupees and making one miserable. Everything has changed and Rangaramanujam is fully aware of it. He has analysed the position in his book "History of South Indian Music". He himself concludes, "Of in times of distress succour dawns from Heaven". There is a saying that people get the Government they deserve. I add "music they deserve".

I was amused to read a report in the *Hindu* a few days ago that there is a scramble for the secretaryship of musical organisations. It is a position of patronage and it is a very important one, according to the writer. One can understand it because there is a regular trade in recorded songs and a singer's position is in advantage. The position of a music critic (journalist) is similar. The musician looks

up to both for help. Our musical values got corrupted when one took to it as a profession. Competition, rivalry and commercialism came in. The irony is that a vidwan sings "Nidhi Tsala Sukhama" to fill his purse! But I am never tired of saying that making a living by music is not inconsistent with maintenance of standards. Amassing wealth is a different matter. There is no need to lower one's standards imagining that the listener will not like his normal singing. Money is the greatest corrupter in this world and this covers the field of music also.

AS AUTHOR

Rangaramanujam has published a number of books. He took the trouble of collecting Kritis of the Trinity, Javalis Padas etc. of various composers and publishing them in six volumes, now compressed into four. The sources, at least for the Kritis, are not all authentic, according to persons who know. But as reference books they have a value. He introduced a notation which had been his life-long preoccupation. His American sishya himself says that he is one of the many who do not entirely share Rangaramanujam's feeling that "ultrarefinement of written notation is the only means for preserving the essence of the art". One who expatiated on sruthis should have realised the imperfection of notation. Our music is learnt only by hearing and yet he would condemn "Karna parampara".

A LIFETIME OF RESEARCH

Inconsistencies apart, it is difficult to come across a person like him, a life-long student of music. All his time was taken up with private study, research and teaching of Carnatic music. He has brought out

collections of about 1500 compositions in notation. One of his books is on Pallavi singing. All these cannot, however, be said to be pioneering efforts. His book on Papanasam Sivan's pieces with notation was perhaps the earliest effort to popularise them. His book on Sarangadeva's "Sangita Ratnakara", in English, is a concise and good summary of the seven chapters of the classic. He has also published a translation of Jayadeva's "Geetha Govinda" and the songs in notation in Tamil. He followed it up with a book on Purandara Dasa's padas assisting Smt. Lalithangi with notation for the pieces.

A FINE SURVEY

His "History of Carnatic Music" (in English) makes interesting reading. He hopes that this book would light a spark

and generate the enthusiasm for further effort in reminding people of the noble ideals of the past. In the four decades from the thirties, Carnatic Music, according to him, "has burnt its boats and got marooned in a trackless desert". This sounds like a mere cry in the wilderness. Persons like Rangaramanuja Iyengar are, however, necessary to remind people that they are slipping. But that clan is vanishing.

Respect for tradition, however, will not completely die. It would certainly live even among a barely few votaries who practise music for its own sake, fully realising that what we know is only a handful and what we do not know is of the size of the whole world. A Tamil verse says that the goddess of learning viz. Saraswathi, realising this, is still studying!



News & Notes

Great and successful artists seldom go to grass gracefully. As the great singer Caruso put it: "When you hear that a great artist is about to retire, don't believe it". As another music critic pointed out: "The hardest thing for a prima donna is to realise that she is no longer one. She will never admit it, although she knows the danger signals. Why don't they step back gracefully before the catastrophe occurs?" This is as true of artists in India as elsewhere. It is hardly necessary to cite actual instances.

But the great mridangam wizard of our times, Sangitha Kalanidhi Palghat Mani Iyer—the only percussionist to receive such a honorific—has recently announced his retirement from all public appear-

ances. While the gesture has to be appreciated as well-timed, the absence of this Titan from music platforms will be widely missed. He himself had begun the vanishing trick by his controversial decision of some years ago not to play mridangam when there was amplification of sound.

With him an epoch comes to an end. "Only great men end epochs" observed Earnest Newman. It is Mani Iyer's unique privilege to put the curtain down on himself. Age did not wither him, it is his privilege to do the withering.

But one's intense and poignant memories of the 60 years of his supreme sway over the domain of rhythm will stay long in the art and science of this wonderful

instrument, whose sounds stimulated a Nobel Laureate (CVR) to write a brilliant thesis, he went far beyond the dimensional world of the blue-prints. Like all geniuses, he discovered the laws that govern the construction of his art. His playing not only transcended grammar but brought a new, fresher, more contemporary tone to the art, while at once honoring what was just and solid in the traditional forms. *"His was a mind unmistakably original, yet it was an originality that never lost itself in extremes and always raised intelligently to a new level."* There was an insistence in his playing which even the veteran vocalists greatly envied—and sometimes disliked! because he always played with the *panacha* and daring of a man in the full vintage of his powers; and no mridangam or any other had his nimble and flexible intelligence, ready to seize on the possibilities of highlighting sections of Krithis and to translate their vivid patches and famous passages into rhythmic embellishments of an indelible virtuosity.

Who will ever forget his "ithani avarthanams" stamped with gracious melody (rather a little known commodity before him), enticing rhythm, proceeding step by step like a discourse, each phrase growing organically out of the one preceding it and into the one that followed it, the delicate and gradual transitions in the gait (*nadai*), the golden opening out of the final sequence "burgeoning as a sunrise on a full sea" into a majestic surge—and withal, a total absence of sprawling effort. Mani Iyer never "gorged" rhythm as the other schools did. Instead, he savoured it as a winetaster: he brought to it a clarity, a certainty and a new dimension that gave his playing the momentum of a planet in its orbit. When he got into his famous inebriated moods, an Ariakudi or Alathur or G.N.B. or Lalgudi Jayaraman or any other master for that matter, was often unable to contain his genius and this has even been acknowledged by them.

Such a giant was the kindest of accompanists to young and aspiring artists, vocal or instrumental and during the last 10 years especially, he went out of his

way to spot promising vocalists, violinists, vaimaks, flautists etc., and offered to play for them for mere pittance. The shot-silk temperament he had enabled him to have the most impeccable platform manners. No one had anything to complain of. Hence he achieved that universality which is the symbol of the highest order of genius. True to his conscience, he is now teaching the art to the very young at Rishi Valley School and one may be sure that this gives him more satisfaction and peace of mind than the half-century of platform exploits.

Dr. S. A. K. Durga of the Department of Indian Music, University of Madras, whose researches in voice culture (embodied in a book of the same title) have deservedly attracted wide attention, has been invited to represent this country at the International Seminar on "Vocal Abuse and Misuse" conducted by the International Association of Experimental Research in Singing at Denver, Colorado, U.S.A., from 28th July 1980. Dr. Durga will present a paper on the "Indian Literature on Vocal Abuse". This is a signal honour indeed for India and Dr. Durga and we heartily congratulate her. She also plans to pursue further studies for a Doctorate in Ethnomusicology at the Wesleyan University, U.S.A. We wish her all success.

The Ariakudi Ramanuja Iyengar Trust, formed by his sishyas, prominent among them being Messrs. K. V. Narayanaswami, B. Rajam Iyer and Madurai Krishna Iyengar, was launched in a couple of meetings held in Madras recently. The attendance and speeches made at these meetings were a record for such an occasion which proved that the prince of performers, Sangita Ratnakara Ramanuja Iyengar, is still held in the highest esteem by the public as well as musicians. The above mentioned three sishyas have registered themselves as Trustees and have also obtained tax exemption for those who contribute to the Trust. The objects of the Trust seem to be modest and stress is laid for the present, on the training of pupils to follow in the footsteps of the veteran—

a laudable objective. The initial contribution of about Rs. 4,000 has been made by the three sishyas themselves. There are already the Semmangudy Trust and the Chembai Trust both working modestly but satisfactorily. Let us see what satellites the 5 stage rocket of KVN, Rajam & Krishnan can put into the space-time dimension of Ariakudi.

"Vintage comes from some lengthy cellarage", wrote Cardus. As mentioned in the previous number of this Journal, a solo violin recital of Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman, for which Karaikudi Mani had provided mridangam accompaniment, was pulled out of the cellars of the National Archives and submitted by All India Radio to an international competition of recorded violin tapes at a Baghdad competition which attracted 77 entries. Seven tapes were picked out for quality and out of these the tape of Lalgudi was adjudged the best by the promoters—which just shows that a divine impulse of will or inspiration, moves the interpretative and creative impulses of maestros who perhaps unknown to themselves are vouchsafed grace when recording music for posterity!

The sequel to this circumstance was that the International Music Council, an autonomous body affiliated to the UNESCO and having its own independent budget and whose 25th anniversary was celebrated in Paris in January 1974 and earlier in the Bath festival in 1966, Ravishankar and Yehudi Menuhin had given a joint concert, decided to publicise the virtuosity of four of these violin displays by extending invitations to the concerned artists from India, Egypt, Yugoslavia and Ireland for recitals in Europe. The performers so invited were Lalgudi (India), Ahmed El Hemenawi (Egypt), Dragutin Dju Jelvic (Yugoslavia) and Frankie Gavin (Ireland). These artists gave short displays of their violin techniques at the Radio Stations at Paris (France), Cologne (Germany) and Brussels (Belgium) before distinguished invited audiences. The performances were relayed by most of the radio stations in Europe. To Lalgudi fell the honour of

giving the longest recital viz. 40 minutes, accompanied on the Mridangam by that fine accompanist, Vellore Ramabhadran. According to the Indian musicians, the trip was a memorable and rewarding one. The I.M.C. had made excellent arrangements for wide publicity and for the personal comforts of these visiting musicians.

The Krishnanand Music Circle, founded by Sri Krishnanand and his very devoted band of disciples and admirers, is doing excellent service in Madras to propagate classical Hindusthani music among South Indians. Today there are more than 50 students well trained in that system and capable of giving public performances. It is a healthy sign that interest in Hindusthani music in Madras is gradually widening. The credit for this should go to Mr. Krishnanand, whose total dedication to the task has to be seen and heard, to be believed. Over 25 years, he has imparted training to many students and eminent Kamaṭh musicians including Sri T. V. Gopalakrishnan; M. S. Gopalakrishnan and others have availed themselves. Indubitably one of its in classical Hindusthani music in Madras are no longer a rarity. Mr Krishnanand is the pioneer as well as the current architect of this interesting transformation of the musical landscape.

Simple and austere in his ways of life, Mr. Krishnanand owed his initiation to his mother, Smt. Krishna Bai of Ankola in North Mysore. He joined a dramatic troupe when very young and was encouraged by Sri Dasappa, an actor and a musician. Guru Venkata Rao of Ramdurg, a veteran exponent of the Kirana Gharana, trained him in classical music. He developed his personality further under Sri Kalinga Rao, Sri Basavarayya and Sri B. K. Misra. He grew up to become a first-rate Hindusthani musician and in 1974, friends and admirers arranged a Silver Jubilee celebration festival to commemorate his services to music. A purse was also presented to him in recognition thereof.

His 25th birth anniversary Hindusthani music festival was successfully conducted at the Bharatya Vidya

Bhavan, Mysapore. Though a vocalist, Sri Krishnand also imparts training in sitar, bansuri, violin, vichitra vina and tabala. Often he accompanies his students on the latter. Unassuming and cultured in demeanour, Sri Krishnand draws the best out of his students who have respect bordering on affection for him. Madras city, which flocked in thousands to hear the great maestros like the late Abdul Karim Khan, the late Bade Ghulam Ali Khan and Amir Khan and gives an even bigger hand to the high ranking Hindu-sthani musicians of the present day, can well claim that it has no blinkers where Hindusthani music is concerned. The boot, in fact, is on the other leg since few Hindusthani Ustads deign to be present when Carnatic music's mighty maestros give concerts at Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta etc.

On 11th June 1980, Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer unveiled the portrait of the late P. R. G. Gopala Iyer (father of Padma Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman) at the Krishna Gana Sabha, Madras, in a short speech in the course of which he made the significant observation that, in his younger days, he lacked the courage to train his sons in the field since social opinion even 40 years ago looked upon musicians as a tribe in a pejorative light



KSM

TAMIL NADU EYAL ISAI NATAKA MANRAM

With a hefty grant of Rs. 4.5 lakhs from the State Government the above cultural body has planned a week-long Cultural Festival at Madras, starting on the 10th July, as part of its Silver Jubilee celebrations. Cultural troupes from Karnataka, Orissa, Assam and Punjab will take part in the festival, which also includes Bharata Natyam by such stars as Dr. Padma Subramaniam, Vyayantimala Bali, Swarnamukhi, Vidipatani, Music by Madurai Somu, Kudipudi by Shoba Naidu etc. An exhibition of ancient musical instruments and a conference on the 15th are additional features.

The Chief Minister, Shri M. G. R. will preside over the inaugural function on the 10th and among other items will give cash award of Rs. 500 to 10 needy artistes, besides conferring the title of "Tham Pirum Kalagnar" on 12 veteran artistes like Smt. Rukmini Devi, Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi, Sri Kripananda Varier, Sri Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Smt. T. Balasaraswathi, Sri Palghat Manni Iyer, Smt. K. B. Sundarambal.

Under the inspiring leadership of the Executive Director, Minister Shri M. G. R., Tamil Nadu's cultural scene is becoming more and more vibrant.

We wish the Festival all success and the Manram many years of useful service, under the wise guidance of Mr. Justice P. R. Gokulakrishnan (President) and Thiru D. V. Narayanaswami, the energetic Secretary.

(as dancers were). Whereas Sri Lalgudi (and others too) had boldly trained their children for a career in music if they chose. In the musical backwoods days early this century, even the unsurpassed master of the violin, Tirukkodikaval Krishna Iyer of hallowed memory, is said to have advised his son Sri Ramiah, a good violinist, not to take to this profession. That supreme artist seems to have even met with some social constraint in getting his daughter married, on the ground of his being a "musician". So contemptible as a class were musicians regarded then! How far we have progressed since!

The speeches on this occasion were mercifully short—in fact, they lasted less than 10 minutes and the whole function was a model of well scrubbed-up efficiency. One's enjoyment of the occasion was heightened manifold by the impeccable violin duct presentation by Lalgudi J. G. R. Krishnan, and Kum. Akela Natarajan. While the young lad proved that he was every whit a chip of the old block and gave a faultless exhibition of imaginative, tidy, precise musicianship, Kum. Akela did not lag far behind him and whether in raga alapana or neraval or swaras, her answering statements showed the stamp of class and promise. May Lalgudi Gopala Iyer's tribe increase!

Sree Vyasa Teertha

(1447 to 1539 A.D.)

BY

SRI R. K. SRIKANTAN

Indian culture is of great antiquity. The study of Dasa Sahitya of Karnataka brings to light the names of numerous dasas and their works. Some of the important works of these Dasas have been recently critically edited by scholars. The scope of my talk to-day* is to give a brief historical account of the whole Hari Dasa movement in general and a short life sketch and achievements of Sri Vyasa Teertha in particular.

The Bhakti Cult which forms a part of Indian culture is almost associated with the origin of humanity. North India the Punyaboomi—the region of many an avatara of Vishnu, had lost its spiritual outlook and had become a hot-bed of political struggle for existence, territorial expansion and temporal power. Added to this, the Arabs, who had penetrated into Gujarat and occupied a part of north-India, had shattered the Hindu nerve by their triumphant march. As such South India was more congenial for the exercise of spiritual aspirations and Sadhanas. The Vaishnava Cult found a favourable atmosphere for its revival and propagation in the Tamil land under the inspired songs and teachings of seers like Nammalvar, Tirujnana-sambandar, Yamunacharya and the celebrated Ramanuja.

In Karnatak and parts of Deccan the indigenous Shaiva teachers and Vaishnava saints and philosophers joined hands in stifling and driving out the growing Jainism by scholastic discussion and propagandistic activities, from the time of the early Chalukyas of Badami, who were the favourite devotees of Bhagavan Narayana. So Vaishnavism became the popular religion of Karnataka and the Vaishnava saints adopted Kannada, the regional language, as the medium of expression. Shree Narahari Theertha, the pupil of Madhavacharya, lost no time in founding the Dasa-Kuta in 15th Century A.D.

DASA KOOTA

The expansion and popularity of Dasa Koota may be observed in the following chronological order.

1. Thirteenth century A.D. Sri Narahari Theertha started Dasa Koota. It is called a creative period.

2. Fifteenth to Sixteenth century A.D. This period is called the classical period. Here Sreepadaraya Sri Vyasa Theertha, Sri Vajreswara Theertha and Sri Purandara Dasaveta worked for Dasa Koota.

3. "Srinivasa" period. A.D. 15th period called stimulative period. During this period Sri Raghavendra Theertha and Vedhesha Theertha worked.

* At the Music Academy, Madras in December 1979.

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4. Eighteenth to Nineteenth century A.D. This period is called the didactic period, when Sri Vijayadasa, Gopala Dasa, Jagannatha Dasa and prasanna Venkata Dasa worked and produced works of highly technical and abstract nature.

Sripadaraya, the father of Dasa koota literature, was the preceptor of the celebrated Saint philosopher, Sri Vyasa Theertha.

SRI VYASA THEERTHA

There are many books which give the source for knowing the life of Sri Vyasa Theertha. To name a few important works: (1) "Vyasarajabhyudaya" which was written by Kumbakonam Vijayendra Theertha. This work is dedicated to Sri Surendra Theertha who was a disciple and contemporary of Sri Vyasa Theertha. Second important work is "Gurunama Rathnamalika" written by Sri Sudhendra Theertha, the teacher of Vijayendra Theertha.

Thirdly, "Sree Vyasayogi charitam" by Somanatha Kavi and lastly, the Kcerthanas of Purandara Dasa and Vijaya Dasa etc.

During the fifteenth century, Venkata-giri nayaka ruled over Bannur, a principality of Talakad. His minister was Ramadeva. Ramadeva was also a religious and spiritual guide to his chieftain. His ministrations, with wisdom and foresight, had earned him the little name "Sumathi" and "Acharya". His wife was Lakshamma a well matched associate of his life. They had no issues for a long time. They prayed to all deities, performed rites and functions, yet they were denied progeny. They became sad and forlorn. At last,

after 20 years of yearning, they begot a daughter.

Still their yearning for a male child remained unfulfilled. Then on benediction from Vedavyasa through the blessings of Sri Brahmanya Tirtha Swamiji of Abbur matha, two male children were born to them. But Sri Brahmanya Tirtha had obtained a promise from the couple that the first child would be handed over to him. The Swamiji was eagerly waiting for the birth of such a child to succeed him to the Abbur matha. The disciples of Sri Brahmanya Tirtha, waited with a golden basin to receive this child. This child was born in 1447 A.D. and was named Yathiraja as Brahmanya Tirtha could foresee the glory of his life. Brahmanya Tirtha took upon himself the task of rearing the child with all devotion and purpose playing all the three roles of father, mother and guru. To amuse the child, the swamiji would sing Sanskrit and Kannada Stotras. When Yathiraja was five years old, his upanayanam was performed. When he attained the 7th year, the swamiji consecrated him with Pranava manthra, and gave him Sanyasa Deeksha. As Yathiraja's birth had been blessed by Sri Veda Vyasa, he was named "Vyasaraja Tirtha".

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Vyasaraja Tirtha was sent for education to Mulabagalu under the tutelage of Sri Padaraja. For 12 years, he received brilliant education and mastered all the sastras. His scholarship and brilliance earned him the name of "Naveena Vyasa". The Haridasa Deeksha which he obtained from his guru enabled him to inspire and mould the great dozens of Dasakeeta Purandara Dasa, Kamakadasa and Vadiraja and thus prepare the ground for the

emergence of great creations in Kannata music and the guru, Sri Vasudeva, the guru of Vyasa Tirtha, knew Tamil very well and had admired Sri Vaishnava prabandhas that were recited in temples. His thoughts were aroused to create such songs in Kannada. He desired his disciples to sing such songs and also compose such songs. Hearing some of these, Sri Vyasa Tirtha, a brilliant ability got a filip and he secretly composed many songs under the mudra of "Sri Krishna". But this had not been informed to his guru. But Sripadaraya knew about this secret and waited for an opportunity to bring this to light.

"God bless you to compose many such songs as you sang to-day".

Vyasaraja was a born genius. Astounding intellect, sharp intelligence, quick perception and full comprehension—these were his assets. He was an encyclopaedia. There was nothing he did not know in the Vedas, Sruthi, Smriti, Sastras, Puranas, Vyakarana, Chandas, Tarka, Mimamsa, Shaddarshanas, music and literature. His Akhanda Brahmacharya and the tapas gave him a hallowed personality. He was a rare combination of all noble qualities and high attainments.

RELIGIOUS MISSION

After finishing his gurukulavasa, Vyasaraja returned to Abbur matha. Sri Brahmanya Tirtha made no delay in making over the lordship of his peetha to Vyasaraja. On the occasion of the investiture ceremony, the parents of Vyasa Tirtha participated. This was in 1478 A.D. From then onwards, Vyasa Tirtha took over the onerous duties of the mathadhipathya. He was just 20 years old then. He decided immediately to undertake deshayatra for spreading and establishing Dwaitamata Siddhanta. He journeyed to Kashi, Gaya, Ayodhya, Madhura and other places in the north. On his way to Kurukshetra he came to Delhi. An extra-ordinary event took place there. The son of Sultan Bahalul Lodi, the monarch of Delhi Sultanate, died suddenly. Somehow this information was given to Vyasa Tirtha. By evoking his superhuman power he brought the dead son to life. Overwhelmed with joy, the sultan offered his obeisance and hospitality to Vyasaraja.

Vyasaraja later proceeded to Mithila. There he encountered a formidable

scholar named Pakshadhara misra or Immadi Jayadeva. He had earned the nick name "Peeyoosha varsha", and he was overwhelmed in no time. Subdued and convinced, Pakshadhara Misra took conversion to Madhva Mata at the hands of Sripadaraya. Many more scholars like Satyanatha, Harimisra were subdued and were appointed as Kulpatis of the Vidyapeethas Sri Vyasaraja founded at Haridwar, Gaya, Kashi etc. Thus, Sanskrit education was very much encouraged.

ADMINISTRATOR

After his return from digvijaya of North India, Vyasaraja had to go to Vijayanagara at the instance of his guru Sri Padaraya. In the Vijayanagara kingdom during the rule of Viroopacharaya of Sangam dynasty, misrule, disorder, criminal offences became wide spread. The people urged Saluva Narasimha Naika to become the ruler and Sri Padaraya also had his hand in this affair. The new ruler was successful in establishing order and security in the kingdom. The king, in gratitude, honoured Sripadaraya by seating him on a bejewelled throne. Sripadaraya was already old. So he desired to make-over his Rajaguru padavi to Sri Vyasaraja. After taking over this padavi, Vyasaraja went to Tirupati and stayed there for 12 years. During this period, he put an end to the maladministration that was prevailing in the temple and brought about many modifications in the methods of worship. As he did in North India, Vyasaraja established Vidyapeethas in South India in places like Mulabgilu, Kumbhakonam, Kanchipuram and Udipi. During this time, Sri Vadiraja became his disciple.

In the meantime troubles had started again in the Vijayanagara kingdom.

Schemes and plots developed to deprive Krishnadevaraya from becoming the king by making him blind. Sri Vyasa Theertha ably got over this trouble and celebrated the coronation of Krishnadevaraya in 1509 A.D. This opened a new chapter in the history of Vijayanagara. What hitherto was Vyasaraja, lord supreme in the religious and spiritual world, was made lord supreme in the temporal world by Krishnadevaraya. The king was saved from a terrible "Kuhu yoga". To get over this trouble, the king made Vyasaraja the 'Karnataka Vidyaganara Simhasandheeswara', and celebrated the Ratnabhisheka by seating him on his throne. During this period, Navakoti Narayana, Srinivasa Naika was blessed by Sri Vyasaraja. Srinivasa Naika was named Purandaradasa and the Ankita of "Purandara Vithala" was given to him. Purandara Dasa sang in praise of Vyasaraja.

Vyasaraja also had a high praise for Purandaradasa and sang.

A COLOSSUS

The great prodigy of devotion and bhakti, Kanakadasa was also given Harideksha by Vyasaraja. After fulfilling all his responsibilities and duties for which he was born, Sri Vyasa Theertha attained Samadhi in Navanarayana, near Angondri in 1539 A.D. He lived for 92 years. Even now his resting place continuing in Sosele, near Mysore.

Immense was the contribution of Vyasa Theertha to the religious, social, political and cultural fields. His main works in Dwartha-Siddhanta are "Tatparya Chandrika", Navamrita, Tarka Sandhya, Maya vada Khandana Leeka, Mundara Manjari, Upadhi Khandana Leeka, Mandara

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Manjari" etc. He earned glorious fame.

The impact of his tour in North India left an indelible mark and influence on Bhakti pantha. As a result Chaitanya's bhakti movement flowered forth in Bengal. Further great bhaktas like Kabirdas, Surdas and Tulasidas and Tukaram had all their source of influence from Vyasaraja's Hari bhakti movement.

CONTRIBUTION TO MUSIC

Immense was his contribution to music and literature also. Haridas Sahitya was enriched by his numerous Keertanas, suladis, padas and Vritta namas under the Ankita "Sri Krishna". These compositions bristle with melody, depiction

of Rasa and bhakti. In his foot steps did his disciples march on for copious contribution to music and literature. Vadiraja, Purandaradas and Kanakadasa became mighty in their own right, drawing full strength and inspiration from their guru Vyasaraja. The kritis of Vyasa Teertha are famous for their poetic excellence, sublimity of thought and yati and prasa beauties. In short we have in Vyasa Teertha a rare combination of a musical genius who could clothe his beautiful creations in music in equally beautiful language, thus making them a perennial source of inspiration and delight to generations of music lovers. In an age of withering faith and battered values, it is good to remember one of the greatest seers of mankind. Sri Vyasa Theerta. [By kind courtesy of the author and the Music Academy].



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பெரியதாய்வு எவ்வளவு மாய்ந்தார்
களை மூலம் வெளியுக்கு வந்தவர்கள்
கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள். உதாரணமாக
கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள். உதாரணமாக
கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள். உதாரணமாக

இந்த நேரத்தில் காலம் பார்த்து
கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள். உதாரணமாக
கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள். உதாரணமாக
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கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள். உதாரணமாக

வாதி ஸம்வாதி பொருத்தம்

ஒரு நல்ல உத்தமராகம் என்று, அதன்
புறக்காரம் காலத்திலும் காலம்
காலமாக, காலத்திலும் காலம்
காலமாக, காலத்திலும் காலம்
காலமாக, காலத்திலும் காலம்
காலமாக, காலத்திலும் காலம்
காலமாக, காலத்திலும் காலம்
காலமாக, காலத்திலும் காலம்

வடதேச இசை மரபு

இந்த மரபானது நேரடியாக வடதேச
இசை மரபின் கலப்பினால் வந்த
விளைவாக நமது காலத்திலிருந்து
அவர்கள் எடுத்துக் கொண்டதாகத்
தெரிகிறது. இது மரபானது,
தேவநாபுரி மரபைச் செவ்வனே நகரம்,
ராகங்களின் எண்ணிக்கையிலும் அவர்

காலம் மரபு வழியில், ரத்தினமனை
பல வகைகளிலிருந்து ஆய்வுசெய்து
கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள். நாமும்
அதைக் கேட்டு ரசிக்குகிறோம்!

அந்த போல் அவர்களது இசை மரபி
விதத்து நாம் எடுத்துக் கொண்ட ஹமீர்
கல்யாணி, யமுனா கல்யாணி, பெஹார்,
காரி, ரிதது போலி போன்ற ராகங்
களையும், நமது பழம் பெரும் ராகங்களைக்
கையாளுவது போலவே, அதாவது வட
தேசத்து இசை மரபில் கையாளுவது
போலவே, ரத்தினகத்தை முன் வைத்தும்
ஸ்வரவாதிப் பொருத்தங்களுக்காகவும் -
பல வக்ர - வர்து - திரீக்க - அந்ஸ்வரபர
யோகங்களையும் குறையே பாடுகிறோம்.
நமது மரபு வழியில் கமகச் செறிவோடு
பாடுவோம். அவர்களது ராகங்களின்,
ஸ்வரபரதானமாக கமகங்களைக் குறைத்
துக் கொண்டு ஸ்வரஸ்தான அடிப்படை
யிலேயே பாடுகிறோம். கணித முறையில்
நிச்சரீய ஸ்வரங்களுள் ராகங்களையும்
இந்த போல் ஸ்வரஸ்தான அடிப்படை
யிலேயே தான் பாடுகிறோம்.

அன்னிய சாணை

மதாணமாக, தேவநாபுரி என்ற ஸம்
வாதிப் பொருத்தங்கள் அதிகமாக இல்
லாத ராகத்தைப் பாட்டுநேர்ந்தால், அதன்
ஸ்வரஸ்தானங்கள் மாறவில்லை வைத்துக்
கொண்டு தான் பாடுகிறோம். கோடி
சாணை கலக்காமல் இரக்க வேண்டுமென்
றும் கவனித்துக் கொள்கிறோம்.

கேவலானியில் வைரவி சாணை கலக்காம
விநக்கவர் ஹரிநாமப்ரதீபியில் கமராவோ
காப்ரேயோ கலக்காமலிருக்கவும்,
யதார்த்தம், வாசஸ்தி போன்ற ராகங்
களில் கல்யாணி கலக்காமலிருக்கவும்
வேண்டுமென்ற வண்போடு செயல்படு
கிறது.

உதாரணமாக, கோடி பாடுவது போல தேவநா
புரி கலக்காமலிருக்கிறோம். அப்படி கோடி
யில் ஸ்வரஸ்தானங்களையே பாடும்

கத்தில் வைத்துக் கொண்டிருக்கிறோம். அதே
போல் வைரவியில் கோவலி கலக்காமலிரு
கிறோம். கல்யாணியில் வாசஸ்தியை வைத்து
போன்ற ராகங்கள் கலக்குமென்றே நாம்
அந்தவகை இல்லை.

ஸ்வர அடிப்படை

கோடி, வைரவி, காம்போரி, கல்
யாணி, பேகடை, ஸாவேரி போன்ற
பிராசீன ராகங்களின் முடிவுவகையாம்,
பாவங்களும், பாரம்பரிய அறிவுறும்
நமது உள்ளத்தில் உறைந்துள்ளதாகத்
நாம் நம்புகிறோம். இத்தகைய பாரப
ரியும் கணித முறை ராகங்களுக்கு எந்
படவிலும், காரணம்: ஸ்வர அடிப்படை
யில் கையாள்வதும் ராக ரூபநிபந்தன
யில்லாததும் தான். வக்ர-வர்து-அந்
ஸ்வர-விசேஷபரயோகங்கள் போட்டு எவ்வா
பழம் பெரும் ராகங்களைப் போலவே கை
யாளுவோம், பல உருபங்களை இயற்றி
ராக ரூபங்களை உருவாக்கி, நல்ல உணர்ச்சி
ததும்பும் படியான வாழ்நிபந்தன வாய்
வாக அந்த ராக ரூபங்களை வெளிப்படுத்தி
ரஸ பாவங்களும் தனித்தனையாக நமது
கின்ற தவனி விசேஷங்களும் அவையப்
பெற்றும், இத்தகைய ராகங்களைய பாவ
ஸ்வரத்தியோடு பரகாசிக்கலாம்.

நிகு லுந்திகளின் முறை

நமக்கு மார்க்கத்திலுள்ள அமைந்த
ஸங்கீத திறமர்த்திகள் நிகுக் முறையில்
தான் ராகங்களை மருவாக்கியுள்ளார்கள்.
உதாரணமாக, கீவலானி என்பது மாய
ஸ்ரீகாரம். திரீதர் பக்தியில் இருந்து
கிரணுவலி என்று பெயர். ஸ்ரீகாரம் காம
தத்தில் தத்துவான ஆதோவாண-கலோ
வாண-கலோ: ஸ்ரீகாரம், பக்தியுள்ள
ஸ்ரீபக்திப் பக்தியுள்ள பக்தியுள்ள
யுண்டாகுதல் என்ற நிகுத்தொடர் பக்தியுள்ள
தான் "கலவி" என்று பெயர். பக்தியுள்ள
தான் "கலவி" என்று பெயர். பக்தியுள்ள
தான் "கலவி" என்று பெயர். பக்தியுள்ள

மபகா ரிசு-என்ற மாயபாண அலோக
கலவி என்று பெயர். பக்தியுள்ள
தான் "கலவி" என்று பெயர். பக்தியுள்ள
தான் "கலவி" என்று பெயர். பக்தியுள்ள
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தான் "கலவி" என்று பெயர். பக்தியுள்ள

பரதேச சங்கீத முறை போல ராகம்,
மபகா ரிசு போல நமது இசைத் துறையிலும்
போல நமது இசைத் துறையிலும்
போல நமது இசைத் துறையிலும்
போல நமது இசைத் துறையிலும்
போல நமது இசைத் துறையிலும்
போல நமது இசைத் துறையிலும்
போல நமது இசைத் துறையிலும்
போல நமது இசைத் துறையிலும்

ஸ்வரவாதி ராக வேல் போல பக்தியுள்ள
தான் "கலவி" என்று பெயர். பக்தியுள்ள
தான் "கலவி" என்று பெயர். பக்தியுள்ள
தான் "கலவி" என்று பெயர். பக்தியுள்ள
தான் "கலவி" என்று பெயர். பக்தியுள்ள
தான் "கலவி" என்று பெயர். பக்தியுள்ள
தான் "கலவி" என்று பெயர். பக்தியுள்ள

மரபுதல்கள்

இது, ஸ்வர அடிப்படையின் இசை
யைக் கையாளுவதற்கான நேரடி எல்
மேலும் ஒரே காலத்தில் விட ஒரே
முறையாக, இவ்வகையாக ஒரே
விடத்து இசைவாக வர, கலவி
வரக்கூடிய, ஒரே காலத்தில் இசைவாக
இசை இக்கலக்கலாக விடத்து ஒரே
விடத்து போலவே சாதகமாக வரத்
இசை முறையை மனம் வரக்கூடிய,
மனம் விடத்து, என்றவற்று முறை கூறு
வதற்காக நாம் அறிவோம்.

இந்த நிகு எண்ணிக்கை காரணம்,
கடந்த 50 - நூல்களில், காம பிசு

வந்தமனங்களை ஓட்டி நமது இசைத் துறையில் நிகழ்த்த சில முக்கியமான திருப்பங்கள் என்று நான் நினைக்கிறேன். மறு துறைகளைப் போலவே சந்தேக நையும் நாம் ஸ்தாபன ரீதியில் கையாள த்துவங்கினோம். ஸங்கீத விற்பனர்களும் மாணவ மாணவியரும் ரசிகர்களும் கூட ஏதாவது ஒரு முறையில் இத்தகைய ஸ்தாபன ரீதிகளைச் சங்கங்களாயினர். அங்கே, தனித் தனிமைகளுக்கு இடமில்லை. ஒரு சிலர் கடி நிப்ட்டு வகுத்த நியதி களுக்கு அடி பணித்து எவ்வோரும் செய்யப் பட வேண்டிய திருப்பம் உறுவாயிற்று. அதனால் குறுவீதிகள் சீடனுக்கு முள்ள தேரடித் தொடர்பு என்பது பழங்கதை வாயிவிட்டது. அல்லது அபூர்வமாயிற்று. குருகுலவாசம் சிஷ்ய குலவாசமாக மாறி இசை சந்திக்க வென்றது, பள்ளிகளும், கல்லூரிகளும் தொடர்வாயின.

ஸ்தாபனங்கள்

பக்கைக் கழகங்களில், விஞ்ஞான மருத்துவசட்டத் துறைகள் போலவே, ஸங்கீதமும் பட்டப் படிப்பாக வழங்க வாயிற்று. ஒரு குறிப்பிட்ட கால வரைக்கூள், ஒரே வேளையில், பல மாணவ மாணவியருக்கு, குறுகிய கால அளவில், சங்கீதத்தின் எல்லா அம்சங்களையும், முன் முன்பையே நிப்ட்டு மீட்டு வைத்துள்ள போதனு முறையில், கற்பித்தாக வேண்டிய சூழ்நிலை உறுவாயின. அதனால் ஸ்வர வாய்வாங்கும், பத்தக வாய்வாங்கும், கற்பிப்பது ஒரு அவியமான தேவை யாகி, காலக் கிரமத்தில் ஸ்வரப்படுத்திப் பாடம் செய்வதென்பது ஒரு உயர்ந்த முறையாகக் கருதப்படுகிறது.

இன்று ஸ்வரங்கள் இல்லாமல் ஸங்கீதமே இல்லை என்ற நிலை உருவாகி யுள்ளதென்றால் அதை யாரும் மறுக்க முடியாது. இந்த முறையில் பயிற்சி பெற்ற நவர்கள் ஆயிரக் கணக்கில் நாடெல் லும் நிறைந்துள்ளனர், இந்த முறையில் சங்கீதம் பரவியுள்ளது—நிறமையும் பெருகியுள்ளது. ரசிகர்களும் பெருகியுள்

ளார். இதற்குக் காரணமாகியிருக்கும், ஸ்தாபனங்களான வானொலி நிலையங்கள் இசைத் தட்டுத் தயாரிப்பாளர்கள், சங் கீத சபைகள், பத்திரிகைகள், இசைப் பள்ளிகள், கல்லூரிகள், பக்கைக் கழகங் கள் போன்ற ஸ்தாபனங்களின் நாம் பாராட்டுகின்ற அதே வேளையில்—ஸங்கீதத்தின் உடையையும், உறுப்புகளையும் விஞ்ஞான ரீதியில் வளரவும், பரவவும் உதவியவர்க் களுக்கு சங்கீதத்தின் உயிரான ராக பாவங்களையும் ரஸபாவங்களையும் எவ்வோரும் உணரும்படி செய்து, ஸங்கீத ஞானத் திற்கு ஆழம் உண்டாக்கவும் அவர்கள் கடமைப்பட்டுள்ளார்கள் என்பதையும் சுட்டிக் காட்ட விரும்புகின்றேன்.

கலாச்சாரம்

நமது காலக் கடந்த கலாசாரங்களும் நாகரிகங்களும் பண்பாடுகளும் பிரதி பலிக்கின்ற அல்லது எடுத்துக் காட்ட வல்ல நமது மரபு வழி வந்த இசை முறைகளையும், நமது முன்னோர்கள் தங் களது அனுபவத்தில் கண்டறிந்த கலை அனுபவங்களையும் அமுரணர்வுகளையும் அனாவொரு கையாளும் வாகவந்தையும் நமது இளங் கலைஞர்கள் கண்டும், கேட் றும், அனுபவித்தும் உணர வழி வகுக் கின்றோம். எல்லாவற்றையும் விஞ்ஞான ரீதியில், கணித முறையில் அணுகி, மூளையையும் மேலும் மேலும் கூர்மையாக்க முயல் வதை, மனித நாகரிகத்தின் முன்னேற்ற மாகக் கருதுகிறோம். இதனால் மனிதனின் இதயத்தில் சூன்யம் உருவாகி அதனால் மிகுந்ததன்மை கொண்ட பீதஸ்ரஸங் களும் அதன் சேஷ்டைகளும் தோன்றி வருகும் நிலையைத் தடுக்க வேண்டாமா?

அளவு

கர்னாடக ஸங்கீதத்தின் ராகபாவங் களில்—ரஸபாவங்கள் ஒரு அனாவொரு கையாளப்பட வேண்டும் என்பார்கள் பெரியவர்கள்.

அந்த முறையில் ரஸபாவங்களே மிகைப் படுத்தாமல் அனாவொரு கையாளும். ராகபாவங்கள் நமது உள்ளத்தில் ஆழ மாக பதிந்திருத்தல் வேண்டும். அதற்கு நமது பழம் பெரும் ராகங்களின் தன் மைகளைப் புரிந்து கொள்ள வேண்டும். ரஸ பாவங்களே மிகைப் படுத்தாமல் அனாவொரு கையாளும் பண்பாட்டையும், ஸர் வலகுவாக, கம்பிரமாக, செப்புவிய்தை கள் இல்லாமல், கேலிக் கூத்துகள் இம் மியளவும் கலக்காத கௌரவத் தன்மை யோடு இசையை அணுகும் முறைகளைப் புரிந்து கொள்ள வேண்டும்.

ராக தேவதைகள்

இத்தகைய மேலான குண விசேஷங் கள் அத்தனையும் கொண்டது நமது முக் கியமான ஒரு சில பழம் பெரும் ராக பாவங்கள் ராக தேவதைகளை புத்தி பூர்வ மாக, அணுகாமல் பக்தி பூர்வமாக அணு கிதல், பக்யதரஸ் மனோஜால மாக இந்தத் தெய்வீகமான ராக பாவங்களை உணரலாம், உணர்ந்தால், கேட்போரை யும், இசைப்போரையும் போரணத் தத்தின் எல்லைகளைக் காணச் செய்யவல்ல நல்ல வழியில் நமது கற்பனைத் திறத்தின் வழியாக ராக ஆலாபனை அமைப்ப் பெற்றால், மொழிக்கப்பாற்பட்ட, மனித இனத்திற்குப் போதுவான, ரஸபாவங்கள் நிறைந்த நமது ராகங் களின் பாவங்களைப் பிற மானிலத்தவர்க் களும், பிற நாட்டினரும் உணர்ந்து போற்றுவார்கள்.

"டைக்" சொன்னது

இதற்கு என்ன செய்ய வேண்டுமென்று நான் சொல்லத்தேவையில்லை. இன்றைக்கு 47 ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன், ஆறாவது ஆண்டு விழாவில் ஸ்வாமிக்கே மதுரைவிதவான் "டைக்" அவர்கள் நிகழ்த்திய சொற் பொழியின் ஒரு பகுதியை மட்டும் எடுத்த வரைகிறேன்.

பெரியவர் 47 ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன்னால் வெளியிட்ட வேண்டு கோள் இது. நமது ஸங்கீதத்தை ஸ்தாபன ரீதியாக மாற்றிய சூழ்நிலையில், நினைத்த தனித்தன்மை யுடைய விதவாங்கன் ஸ்தாபன ரீதியிலும் பங்கு பெற்றது. இந்த ஸ்தாபன ரீதியிலும் ஏற்படக் கூடிய பாதிப்புகளைப் பற்றிக் கவலைப்பட்டார்கள்.

இதை 47 ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன்னால், இசை ஸ்தாபன ரீதியில் நுழைந்த தத்துவாயில் கூறினார்கள். கடந்த 47 ஆண்டுகளில் ஸங்கீதம் அடைந்துள்ள முன்னேற்றங்களை நாம் நன்கு உணர்கிறோம். குறைபாடுகளையும் காண்கிறோம். சீர்த்திருத்தங்கள் புதிய வழி வகைகள் ஆராய வேண்டிய நிலையில் நாம் இருக்கிறோம். இன்று நிறமை மிக்க இளங் கலைஞர்கள் நாடெல்லும் நிறைந்துள்ளனர். அவர்களது தகுதியும் ஆர்வமும் பெருகியுள்ளது. நல்ல கேள்வி ஞானமும் கொண்டுள்ளார்கள் என்பது அவர்களில் பலர் நவன் மெல்லிசைகளை ஆசலயோடு ரசித்து இசைப்பதிலிருந்து புரிந்து கொள்ளலாம், இத்தகைய இசைக் கொடுத்துப் பாடுகின்ற திறன் தானே இசைக்கு அடிப் பையான தேவை!

இளைஞர் திறன்

கர்னாடக சங்கீதம் என்றதும், ஸ்வரப்ரயோகம், இலக்கணம் என்ற சித்தையின் அடிப்படையில் கணித முறையான நிலைவு படுத்திக் கொண்டு கையாண்டது, அமுரணர்வு, ரஸபாவங்கள் போன்றவைகளை நீக்கி, வரண்ட ஸ்வரப்ரயோகக் களாக, புத்தி பூர்வமாக செயல்படுகிறார்கள். இதற்குக் காரணம், தவறான போதனுமுறையே, அன்றி இளைஞர்களால் ஸ்வர அடிப்படையில் உருவாக்கிய இசை வடிவங்கள், பொருள் தெரிந்து பாடக் கூடிய, பாடக்கூடிய அமைந்த இசை வடிவங்கள், பொழுது போக்குக் காக அமைந்த வேடிக்கைகள் நிறைந்த பாடல்கள், பிற இசை மரபின் தழுவிய பாடல்கள் போன்ற மெல்லிசை வகை

கலை, அதிலே எந்த அளவு நுட்பமான இசை நுணுக்கங்கள் அமைந்திருந்தாலும் அவைகளை இயற்கை நமக்களித்த வரப் பரவாதமான கேட்டுப் பாடும் திறனும், இம்மியளவும் பீசகாமல் அதற்கேற்ற கலை யுணர்வோடு அழகுணர்வோடு இசைக்கிறார்கள் இன்றைய இளங்கலைஞர்கள்!

மரபு வழி

இந்த அறுபது முறையில் சாஸ்திரிய வந்திருந்ததையும் கேட்டுப் பாட வேண்டும். அதற்கு, ஒரு சில முக்கியமான ப்ராசை ராகங்களில் அமைந்த பெரிய இசை கருப்படிக்களையும்ராக ஆலாபனை களையும் திறமையும் ஞானமும் பொருந்திய இசை வல்லுனர்களை அழைத்து, இசைக்கச் செய்து, ஒலிப்பதிவு செய்ய வேண்டும். இன்றைய சூழ்நிலையில் இது சிரமமான காரியம் அல்லவோ! இசை சம்

பந்தப்பட்ட எல்லா ஸ்தாபனங்களிலும் இந்நிகைய மரபு வழி வந்த இசையின் ஒலிப்பதிவுகள் வைத்திருக்க வேண்டும். அதை வானொலியில் தொடர்ந்து ஒலி பரப்ப வேண்டும். இசைப் பள்ளிகளில் இசை கற்க விரும்புவோரின் தகுதியை, அவர்கள் இத்தகைய ராகங்களை கேட்ட மாதிரத்தில் அந்த ராகத்தில் அமைந்த கருதிகளைச் சுட்டிக் காட்டுகிறார்களா என்பதிலிருந்து நிர்ணயம் செய்யலாம்.

ஆக, நமது பழம் பெரும் ராகங்களும் அதிலே அமைந்த பெரும் கருதிகளும் அரிய பொக்கிஷங்களாகப் பாதுகாக்கப்பட வேண்டும். இதற்குத்தக்க வழிமுறைகளை நமது வித்வத் ஸபை வகுக்க வேண்டுமென்று கேட்டுக் கொள்கிறேன்.

வாழ்க நமது சாஸ்திரிய சங்கீதம்!

(With acknowledgements to the author of the Music Academy, Madras.)



The Cultural Scene—Bombay

BY

DR. SULOCHANA RAJENDRAN

A day to remember in the cultural diary of Bombay was "A day with Tyagaraja" — a rare experience, when Prof. S. Ramanathan, a Wesleyan Doctor of music took listeners down memory lane for a peep at the little hamlet of Tiruvaiyaru some years ago. And ever since, he has become a regular visitor to the city, conducting classes, holding lecture-demonstrations and giving erudite concerts. One such enlightening occasion was his recent concert at the Shanmukhananda Sabha. The recital was, as expected, one with perspective bringing out the Gathra of classicism and Gambhirya of the traditional format. The varied repertoire that he presented comprised some rare gems of the Musical Trinity and of later-day composers. The invigoratory "Ninne bhajana" with the very opening strains in subdued Gandhara cast the devotional spell of Naattai encapsuled in the spirituality of this ancient vivadhi melas.

A few worthwhile programmes. It was a Karnatak-Hindustani music experiment when Prof. Ginde and R. Muthusubramaniam presented some choice Hindustani compositions of the Maharaja under the auspices of the Swati Tirunal Kalashethram, Bombay. Prof. Ginde's renderings of "Kaanha Kab Sakhi ghar aye" (Behag), "Avadha Sukhadaayi" (Kafi) and "Ramachandra Prabho" (Sinda Bhairavi) were in typical Hindustani form but could also well fit in in a Karnatak setting too. In the artiste's excellent enunciation a sort of rapport with the composer's vision was established, so much so the blend of sangeeta and sahitya brought about a rare joy to the listeners. Muthusubramaniam's "Vishveshwar" (Sindhu Bhairavi) was in pure Karnatak garb. Had these solos been experimented upon in a true Jugalbandhi, the experience certainly would have been thought provoking.

The refreshing pre-dawn breeze wafted gently through Bhupalam which Dikshitar has subtly invested with Sadharana Gandhara. His "Sadachaleshwaram" was a crest jewel. Dr Ramanathan brought out the old-time dignity of Pallavi in his enunciation of Sankarabharanam. The Ragamala virutham added a significant grace to the emotive facets of his rendering. Sikkil Bhaskaran (Violin) was in fine fettle and old time-Kuttalam Viswanatha Iyer (Mridangam) glided gracefully on vocal lines.

The virtuosity of the Royal composer in dance repertoire was well visualised in Bharatanatyam format by the renowned Rajarajeshwari Guru T. K. Mahalingam Pillai whose versatile disciple, Lalitha Easwar, brought out the subtle aesthetics ingrained in the compositions and registered herself as a rising star in the Bharatanatyam firmament.

The polish and the professional relish with which she performed, especially the copious essay of the Dasavatara ("Kamaladasya"), not by any dramatisation but by evoking the shayibhava of the literary

The occasion of Maharaja Sree Tirunal Jayanti celebrations provided a

nations, spoke of the Guru-chela rapport. Her subtle portrayal of the Virahot-khandita rather than the exuberant one that it is usually made, had better impact in the popular padam "Vallapu Tala Vasana" (*Alana*). The quiet display of anxiety matched the modal quietitude of Kuranji in "Aliveni".

The Maharaja's compositions formed the major part of another dance recital by Jayashree Narasimhan under the auspices of Bombay Tamil Sangam and Bhudabhai Memorial Institute. A rare varnam "Sa Va Marusha" (*Ahamas*) in the same Varnamettu as "Saminu Rammanave" of Ponniah Pillai of the Tanjore Quartet and "Kanakamaya" (*Usni*) depicting a devotee describing Lord Padmanabha in procession, were the highlights.

While it is difficult enough to present one dance in all its traditional purity, doing more than one with purity of tradition and without any mix up, is creditable indeed. Kum. Anita Pillai, an alumna of Rajarajeshwari proved that she was quite good in that gentle art from Kerala—Molinitattam. She tapped the sources and has been fortunate in having as her Guru, one who had dedicated herself heart and soul for resuscitating this fallen art, Kalyanikutty Ammal. Within a year, Anita has acquired performing finesse in this art form. From the opening Cholkettu to the concluding Saptam, a number revived by Kalyanikutty Ammal who had also revived the Tillana, the repertoire underlined the swaying grace of the art-form and gentle facial flexions employed to evoke effective abhinaya. The musical

support too was gentle in keeping with the dance.

Since she hit the stage a few years ago, Chitra Visweswaran has become a familiar name with Bombay's artlovers who have been captivated by her charm and uncanny aplomb. It was one more rap-turous session when NCPA presented her in a Bharatanatyam suite soon after her return from abroad.

With the very opening "Ananda Nartana Ganapathim" (*Naattai*) of Uttukadu Kavi she registered her exuberance and modulated it to a state of a Nayika caught betwixt ecstasy and agony in the Todi Varnam "Rupamu Joochi". Going through varied emotions of Khandita, Ashtarasa and Vatsalya and deploying either Netrabhinaya or Mukhabhinaya she left a lasting impress during the abhinaya session. With the melodious Madurai Sethuraman at the helm, the orchestra provided a fine and melodious musical backdrop.

One more dancer from Madras who danced her way into the hearts of Bombay's connoisseurs was Ramya Harishankar who had for padam singing her mother-in-law Lakshmi Krishnamurthy—a rare combination!

A disciple of Swamimalai Rajaratnam of the Vazhuvoor School, Ramya has had a refresher course in Abhinaya under the veteran Kalanidhi Narayanan. Apart from talent and training, dedicated home work enabled her to polish well her repertoire and present it with a finesse. "Ramonama" and "Surdhas" "Mein Nahin Makhana Khayo" were numbers of intense evocation.

Murali Ravali Trust

The Murali Ravali Art Centre Trust hit upon a new idea this year for celebrating the 51st birthday of Dr. Balamurali M. Krishna. In previous years, the trust had honoured 11 distinguished persons by grant of awards. This time it was decided to felicitate 39 more personalities in the field of fine arts and accordingly, a detailed programme was drawn up from 6th to 10th July 1980 at the Venus Colony, Alwarpet, Madras. Elegant and tidy arrangements, brief speeches, crisp citations and grant of the suffix "Sudhar-na" in the titles granted to performers in various fields claimed attention.

The recipients were drawn from a wide field and included such sectors as Prava-chana, Vedaatyenam, Vena (Dr. Emami Sankara Sastry), child prodigy (Ravi Keeran), Poetry (Kannadasan), Vocal music (T.R. Subramaniam Nattuvangam V. R. Samaraj), Mridangam (Umayal-puram Sivaraman), Journalism (Subbudu), Music direction in films (K.V. Mahadevan), Harmonium playing (Pal-ladam Venkataraman), Dance (Yamini Krishnamurthy), Ghatam (Vinayakram),

Violin (M. Chandrasekaran), Nadaswaram (Sheikh Chinna Moulana) Tavil (Valaya-patti), Versatility in Art (T. V. Gopala-krishnan), Art Promotion (Prof. T. V. Ramanujam), Renaissance Com-poser (Dr. Balamurali himself).

As Subbudu rightly remarked, felicitations by a senior artist to other artists are to be lauded as gracious gestures, especially when there is so much jealousy in the profession. But the general public is rather bemused, if not amused too, at these ceremonials and awards since the yardsticks for selection of the persons and of the fields for honouring are not clear despite the citations; and there is no answer to the unspoken doubts in one's mind as to who should honour whom, when and why. Honours and awards for distinguished work in the Arts and other fields best emanate, in the view of this writer, from established public institutions like the Sangeet Natak Akademi, Music Academy etc. which have a charter for such things and follow prescribed pro-cedures and whose decisions represent a consensus of experts. (FAC)



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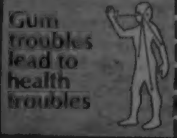
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